

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Walk for Memories
- Challenging your brain
- Healthy Lifestyle Choices
- Protect Your Head
- Home Safety & Dementia

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Reducing the Risk of Dementia



Dementia is a set of symptoms which includes loss of memory, understanding, and

judgment. Most common, over 60% diagnosed with dementia have Alzheimer's disease. There are other types of dementia including: Vascular Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, Lewy Body Disease and Reversible Dementias (ex. depression, medication interactions, delirium from infections, tumours etc.) Understanding the disease and risk factors can help you reduce the risk of dementia.

What are the risk factors associated with Alzheimer's disease?

- Age is the most important risk factor. As we age, our body's ability to repair itself becomes less efficient. The older you become, the higher the risk (one in four over the age of 85 are affected).
- Family history and Genetics. A very small percentage of people with Alzheimer's disease has Familial Alzheimer's disease (FAD). These inherited genes have a powerful influence: if one parent has FAD, each child has a 50% chance of inheriting the disease.

- Female Gender. Twice as many women get Alzheimer's disease than men. Many believe that it is in large part a result of the changes to women's hormones at menopause. However, hormonal changes are not the only factor; on average, women live longer than men and women are also more prone to diabetes, which is also a risk factor.
- Cardiovascular Disease. All the risk factors for cardiovascular disease (such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels) are also risk factors for both Alzheimer's disease and Vascular Dementia. Strokes and mini-strokes are also well-accepted risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and for Vascular Dementia
- Diabetes. It has been known for some time that type 2 ('Adult') diabetes is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. It has been generally assumed that the two are linked by cardiovascular disorders. It has also been known that the utilization of glucose in the brain of people with Alzheimer's disease is impaired, somewhat resembling the situation in the bodies of people with type 2 diabetes. Recently, evidence was also presented that children with type 1 ("juvenile") diabetes are at risk for developing Alzheimer's disease in later life.
- Down Syndrome. Almost all individuals with Down Syndrome who live into their 40's and beyond will develop the abnormal changes in the brain that characterize Alzheimer's disease. It is important to note, however that not all people with Down Syndrome who develop these brain changes will go on to develop dementia.
- Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). In MCI, there is a level of cognitive and/or memory impairment beyond that expected for normal aging but not sufficiently advanced to be called 'dementia'. It is estimated that up to 85% of people with MCI, who are often in their early 40's or 50's, will develop Alzheimer's disease within 10 years.
- Head Injury. Brain injuries at any age, especially repeated concussions, are accepted by most clinicians as risk factors for the later development of Alzheimer's disease.
- Low Levels of Formal Education. Several studies have shown that people who have less than 6 years of formal education appear to have a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. It has been assumed that the brain stimulation associated with learning provides a protective effect for the brain; therefore

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Thank You!



On Saturday, January 28, 2012, we held our 16th Annual Walk for Memories. This year, with the support of the walkers and sponsors, we raised just over \$7,100.00! All of this money will remain in Chatham-Kent to support the programs and services that the Alzheimer Society of Chatham-Kent offers. Special thanks to the following businesses / individuals:

- The Downtown Chatham Centre for providing the location and gift card to the top fundraiser
- Diana at Sears for providing the treadmills
- Ashley and Rob from Goodlife Fitness for providing the Spin Bikes and enthusiasm with the warm-up exercises
- The entire Pub Crawlers Band for providing the entertainment
- George Brooks of Blackburn Radio who provided his voice as our M.C.

Thank you to our local sponsors:



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Home Safety and Dementia

It is very important to continually re-evaluate the safety of your home as the behavior and abilities of the person with dementia change. Because a person seems to be managing well, you may not realize that he has lost the judgment he needs to avoid accidents. Dementia can cause changes in a person's ability to interpret what they see, hear, taste, feel or smell.

Accident prevention begins with a safety check of every room in your house. An important step is to increase the lighting throughout the house with lamps and night lights and a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. The following are some suggestions to help make your home safer:

- Remove scatter rugs and avoid clutter which can create confusion and danger.
- Lock up medications, sharp objects, matches and cleaning supplies. To assist with this, safety latches can be installed on storage cabinets and drawers.
- Monitor all smoking and keep alcohol out of reach.
- Remove all poisonous plants.
- Remove artificial fruits or food shaped kitchen magnets which may appear to be edible.
- You might need to remove the knobs or fuses from the stove.
- Turn the water heater down to avoid burns.
- Move the bed against the wall or add rails to prevent falls.
- Remove the lock from the bathroom door and install grab bars in the tub and beside the toilet.
- Place decals at eye level on sliding glass doors.
- Hide a spare house key outside or with a neighbor in case the person locks you out of the house.
- Display emergency telephone numbers near all telephones.
- A safe home can be a less stressful home for the person with dementia, the caregiver and all family members.
- For additional recommendations regarding home safety, please contact 519-352-1043.

Coming Soon:

On June 14 from 6:30 –8:30 at Active Lifestyles Centre, 20 Merritt Ave, Chatham Dr Jane Rylett speaking about Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's Research



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Reducing Your Risk of Dementia

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more education provides greater protection. However, new studies challenge this conclusion, and it may be that factors often associated with low educational background, such as unhealthy lifestyle, account for the risk rather than low educational level itself.

- **Other Risk Factors.** In addition to the risk factors listed above, all of the following have been documented as risk factors for Alzheimer's disease: inflammatory conditions, a history of episodes of clinical depression, stress, and inadequate exercising of the brain.

We cannot change age, gender or family history, but we can control some risk factors by challenging our brain, making healthy lifestyle choices, remaining socially active, and protecting our head.

Challenging Your Brain

Research is showing that by using your brain, you increase its networks of connections. A brain healthy lifestyle also emphasizes the importance of overcoming routine and monotony in our daily lives. By approaching daily routines in new ways, you engage new or little used mental pathways.

Some ideas to challenge your brain can include:

- Crossword Puzzles / Sudoku Puzzles
- Pursue a new interest such as learning to play an instrument or taking a course.
- Break your routine - change the order of your morning routine.
- Keep up hobbies or take up a

new one.

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Healthy lifestyles choices include being socially and physically active, reducing stress, and making healthy food decisions.

Staying connected socially helps you stay connected mentally. Research has shown that people who regularly interact with others maintain their brain function better than those who don't. Maintain old friendships and make new ones. Staying active and involved with life sends healthy messages to your brain and body.



Research is showing that moderate physical activity promotes brain health by increasing the circulation of blood to the

brain, which nourishes the cells with nutrients and oxygen.

Some ideas on being active include:

- Choose a brisk walk to the store instead of driving.
- Choose activities and sports that you enjoy.
- Start where you can and set reasonable goals. Check with your doctor about the kinds of physical activity that might be right for you.

Stress causes your body to release chemicals that are damaging to the brain and other cells in your body when it persists over time. It is important to identify and to try to lessen the things that cause you stress. Since you cannot always remove all stressors from your life, how you deal with

stress becomes very important to your long-term health.

Through techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and physical exercise, you can alter your internal reaction to your stressors.

Take Action to Reduce Stress.

- Take personal time for yourself. Exercise, relaxation, entertainment, hobbies and socialization are essential parts of our health and well-being.
- Identify unrealistic expectations and try to accept what can not be changed.
- Seek and accept support.
- Prepare ahead - new or unfamiliar situations can create stress and anxiety.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Laugh.

Most of us are aware that healthy eating is good for us and can reduce the risk of diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. But also, healthy food choices are beneficial to brain health. Scientific evidence indicates that long-term healthy dietary choices help maintain brain function, slow memory decline and may help reduce your risk for



Alzheimer's disease. You can boost the nutrition that feeds your brain by choosing the right fats and including foods rich in anti-oxidants.

Put a rainbow of colours on your plate:

- Blue/Purple fruits and vegetable tend to be packed with

anti-oxidants. Blackberries, blueberries, purple cabbage, and plums are all great choices.

- Go green every day with fruits and vegetables that are not only good for your brain but also benefit bones, teeth, and vision. Green options include avocados, broccoli, celery, cucumbers, peas, and spinach.
- Choose white, tan and brown vegetables such as bananas, cauliflower, potatoes, turnips, onions, and garlic.
- Add sunshine to your plate with orange and yellow fruits and vegetables such as grapefruit, cantaloupe, butternut squash, peaches, papaya, oranges, yellow peppers and lemons.
- Reach for reds every day. Beets, raspberries, red grapes, tomatoes, watermelon, radishes, rhubarb, and cherries.

Other ideas include:

- Eat high fibre breads, cereals and grains and low-fat animal proteins. Add pizzazz to dishes with herbs, spices, nuts, and olives. You don't have to give up flavor to maintain a healthy diet.

Protect Your Head

Research is finding that there is an increased risk for developing Alzheimer's disease among those who have experienced brain injuries, especially repeated concussions. Although we are all at risk for head injuries, young people tend to suffer more head traumas. Therefore it is important to protect your head, no matter your age, for lifelong brain health.

Soci t  Alzheimer Society

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The Dementia Journey An Educational Forum for Professionals & Families

APRIL 27, 2012
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Club Lentina
250 National Road
Chatham, Ontario
\$40.00



Key Note Speaker:

Jayne Harvey
of FCS International

Topics:

- **Strawberries for Breakfast**
- **Quality of Life**
- **Anchoring Yourself to Positive Attitudes**



Direct Inquiries to the Alzheimer Society of Chatham-Kent
(519) 352-1043 or email: info@alzheimerchathamkent.ca

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MISSION STATEMENT

**To improve the quality of life of people
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36 Memory Lane
Chatham, ON N7L 5M8

Phone: 519.352.1043

Fax: 519.352.3680

E-mail: info@alzheimerchathamkent.ca

www.alzheimerchathamkent.ca

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