



April 21st, 2012

Preventing Alzheimer's

The lifestyle choices we make every day have a dramatic impact on our physical health – heart disease, diabetes, cancer, just to name a few - and that includes the health of our brains.

You can take steps to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and the sooner you start, the better the effect. Our old friends, diet and exercise, are the two main factors that show up in study after study.

Food for Thought

When you're hungry, what do you reach for? A healthy snack? Or an unhealthy one? Latest research points to food making a big difference in Alzheimer's.

The Mediterranean style diet has the components that are proving to slow the development of dementia.

Eat wholesome, healthy foods, avoiding processed foods.

Keep your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol in check

Watch your weight: maintaining a healthy weight and, specifically, a smaller waistline are beneficial.

Exercise Your Mind

For years we have been told that keeping the brain active (doing puzzles, for example) is important to stave off Alzheimer's and dementia, but, now, three separate studies are highlighting exercise as the key to retaining cognition and intelligence. It's believed that increased oxygen promotes anti-aging effects in the brain and less damage to white matter.

Exercise should be moderate to vigorous in intensity and performed most days of the week. Whether you are walking, swimming or jogging, it's important to keep moving!

Driving for Independence

The loss of independence which comes with driving is one of the greatest worries of those dealing with Alzheimer's or dementia, whether the patient or the caregiver. Observing the overall behaviour of the patient is one of the best ways to gauge if they should still be on the road. The things to look out for are:

- poor judgement,
- inattentiveness,

- clumsiness
- slow reactions

Be sure to handle the situation with tact and respect.

The rate of Alzheimer's and dementia is not as high as other chronic conditions, but it is such a frightening disease that it warrants attention. Our pharmacists can advise you about steps you can take to keep your brain healthy and offer tips to keep you moving.