

Six Ways to Promote Brain Health and Reduce Your Risk of Dementia

1 **Physical Activity and Weight Management**

Follow the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. Engage in **150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week**, in bouts of 10 minutes or more. **Add muscle and bone-strengthening activities** using your major muscle groups at least two days per week. Pick activities that you enjoy so you are more likely to stick with it. **Eat a balanced diet** to assist with weight management.

2 **Diet and Nutrition**

Adopt the **Mediterranean Diet** to optimize brain health. There is no evidence that vitamin and mineral supplementation will promote brain health.

3 **Blood Vessel Health**

Actively manage conditions such as **high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes** to promote blood vessel health.

4 **Smoking and Alcohol Use**

Quit smoking and stay within **Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**, which advise:

- For women: no more than 10 drinks a week, with no more than 2 drinks on most days.
- For men: no more than 15 drinks a week, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days.
- Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit.
- For women aged 65+: no more than 1 drink per day, and no more than 5 per week.
- For men aged 65+: no more than 1-2 drinks per day, and no more than 7 per week.
- A standard drink is 142 ml (5 oz.) of wine, 341 ml (12 oz.) bottle or can of beer or 43 ml (1.5 oz.) of liquor.

5 **Brain and Social Activity**

Strive to **maintain higher levels of brain activity in mid to late-life**. Being **socially active** is an important predictor of well-being in general and brain health throughout life. For optimum effect, incorporate activities that provide both **cognitive and physical elements** such as yoga or tai chi.

6 **Health Conditions and Drug Side Effects**

Watch for medications that have the potential for adverse effects on memory and cognitive function (e.g. **benzodiazepines, 'Z-drug' sleeping pills and certain pain medications** such as those that contain opioids). **Treat depression, get adequate sleep, manage conditions that lower your oxygen levels**, like heart failure, COPD or sleep apnea. Get help with **hearing loss**.