

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



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.



Diet and Nutrition

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



Blood Vessel Health

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



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.



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.



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**.

Other Resources

iGericare

Learn more about dementia and mild cognitive impairment with free online lessons developed by experts in dementia and online learning at McMaster University.

Visit iGericare.ca

Fountain of Health

Tap into five actions you can take to maximize your health and happiness. Use The Wellness App assess your health and resilience, set doable goals and track your progress.

Visit fountainofhealth.ca

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

Learn more about the recommendations for adults and older adults. Download the guidelines from the **ParticipACTION** website and access other helpful resources.

Visit participaction.ca

Smoker's Helpline

Access free and personalized tools to help you quit smoking successfully from the Canadian Cancer Society.

Visit smokershelpline.ca

Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

The guidelines for adults aged 18 to 64 were developed by the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction.

Visit ccsa.ca

Baycrest Brain Health Diet

The Brain Health Food Guide, developed by Baycrest, provides practical advice about healthy eating for the aging brain.

Visit Baycrest.org

Hacking Exercise for Health. The Surprising New Science of Fitness

Take this free online course developed by experts from McMaster University to learn more about the right mix between cardio and strength training.

Visit coursera.org/learn/hacking-exercise-health

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Your source for healthy aging information you can trust.

Visit mcmasteroptimalaging.org