

This information sheet is for people with early stage dementia who would like to know more about the benefits of healthy living for dementia.

Eat a healthy diet

- » Try to eat a well-balanced, healthy diet, including fruit and vegetables. An unhealthy diet can make your confusion worse and make you more prone to other illnesses.
- » Try to keep to a healthy weight. Being overweight will affect your mobility which in turn can also increase your risk of heart disease and diabetes.
- » Constipation can increase your confusion. High fibre foods and plenty of liquids can help you avoid this.

Drink plenty of fluids

- » Dehydration can cause confusion. Try to drink plenty of fluids like water and soft drinks.
- » If your dementia is related to alcohol use it is very important not to drink alcohol because it may make your symptoms worse. Check with your doctor whether it is all right to drink alcohol. Keep within the recommended limits. Too much alcohol can cause confusion.

Keep yourself active

- » Keep active. Think about what you like doing - go dancing, join a singing group or a walking group. This can be fun and can delay or reduce some of the mobility and social issues which can come with dementia. You can protect yourself against falls through improved balance and stronger muscles.
- » Keeping active is also good for your mental health. It can improve your mood, make you feel less stressed and get you out and about. All this may also help you get a better night's sleep.

Friends and family

- » Maintaining and keeping contact with your friends and family is important and can help you avoid low moods.
- » **Keep doing the things that you do well instead of worrying about the things you can no longer do.** Try not to give up on activities that you enjoy - it may be possible to adapt them with the help of family and friends. If you enjoy activities where you need to concentrate such as crosswords and reading, keep doing them for as long as they give you pleasure, adapting them to suit your mental energy levels.
- » **It is very important to keep enjoying the things that give meaning to your life or that provide you with a sense of peace.**

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Health and well being

- » Other medical problems can make the symptoms of dementia worse and may make you feel more confused until the problems have been treated. It is important, therefore, to look after yourself. Have regular check-ups from your doctor, review your medication regularly, have regular checks for your hearing and your eyesight, visit your dentist regularly, and look after your feet.
- » Maintain your old routines for as long as possible and try to think about establishing strategies which will work for you to continue to live well with dementia.

Listen to your body and rest when you are tired

Further information

If you have a new diagnosis of dementia after April 2013, you will be able to receive a minimum of a year's support from a trained link worker. The link worker will be able to give more advice on healthy living tailored to your own needs. Contact your GP for more information.

Call the 24 hour freephone Dementia Helpline on **0808 808 3000** for further information or advice on anything that is worrying you about dementia. Visit the Alzheimer Scotland website www.alzscot.org for lots more information.

This leaflet has been prepared to provide information for people with dementia, and for their carers.