

## PARISH NURSES NOTES FOR JUNE 2022 Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month

Worldwide, more than 55 million people are living with Alzheimer's or another dementia. June is [\*Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month\*](#), which is an opportunity to educate yourself and others on the facts about Alzheimer's and other brain disorders.

Everyone who has a brain is at risk to develop Alzheimer's. While early detection can sometimes lead to better treatment options, there is currently no cure or prevention method to Alzheimer's disease. This June, join the Alzheimer's Association in their campaign to [\*\*#ENDALZ\*\*](#) and raise awareness of the disease.

[Alzheimer's disease](#) is a progressive disease that affects memory, thinking and behavior. It is a form of dementia with symptoms that grow in severity over time. The risk of Alzheimer's disease increases with age and is most common in people over the age of 65 years old.

The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are commonly referred to as the 5 A's of Alzheimer's which include Amnesia, Apraxia, Agnosia, Aphasia, and Anomia.

### 10 Ways to Love Your Brain



Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body. Start now. It's never too late or too early to incorporate healthy habits.

- **Break a sweat** – engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates your heart rate and increases blood flow to the brain and body
- **Hit the books** – formal education in any stage of life will help reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Example, take a class at a local Community College or community center
- **Butt out** – (not what you are thinking 😊). Evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels comparable to those that have not smoked
- **Follow your heart** -evidence shows that risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke- obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes- negatively impact your cognitive health. Take care of your heart and your brain just might follow.
- **Heads up!** – brain injury can raise your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt, use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike and take steps to prevent falls
- **Fuel up right** – eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline
- **Catch some Zzz's** – not getting enough sleep due to conditions like insomnia or sleep apnea may result in problems with memory and thinking
- **Take care of your mental health**- some studies like a history of depression with increased risk of cognitive decline, so seek medical treatment if you have any symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental health concerns
- **Buddy Up** – staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your community, if you love animals” consider volunteering at a local animal shelter. If you enjoy singing, join a local choir (i.e Church Choir with George), or just share activities with friends and family
- **Stump yourself** - challenge and activate your mind. Build a piece of furniture, complete a jigsaw puzzle, do something artistic, play games like bridge. Challenging your mind may have short and long-term benefits for your brain.

## Alzheimer's and dementia: What's the difference?



These terms are often used interchangeably, but they actually have different meanings. Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an umbrella term that describes a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms affect people's ability to perform everyday activities on their own.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia, but it's not the only one.

There are many different types and causes of dementia...

Information obtained from Senior Helpers of Blue Ridge website.