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Hope for Tomorrow...®

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

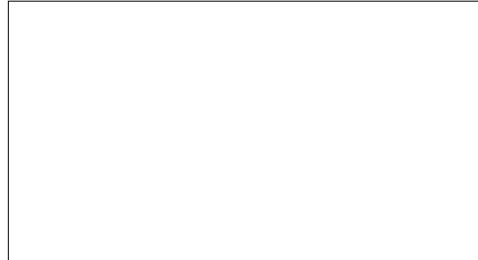
CONTACT

Spring 2011

THE BASICS OF BETTER BRAIN HEALTH

It's never too soon, or too late to start thinking about your brain health.

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Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Alzheimer Society of B.C.
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As research is seeking to uncover the causes of and cure for Alzheimer's disease, it is also helping to inform us about what can be done to reduce the risk factors associated with the disease.

While genetics and age are uncontrollable risk factors, there are ways to maintain or improve brain health in order to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Here are a few activities that can be easily incorporated into your daily routine so that you can get started on improving your brain health today:

Get moving. Exercise is one of the most documented risk reduction strategies for dementia and appears to provide a protective factor, in part by increasing blood flow in

the brain, encouraging the production of new brain cells and helping to reduce brain inflammation.

Even moderate physical activity can make a difference - check with your doctor about the kinds of activities that might be right for you.

Be interactive. Social interaction appears to have a protective effect against Alzheimer's disease. A number of research studies have shown that people who regularly interact with others maintain their brain function better than those who don't.

Combining social interaction with physical activity is even better - so try walking with a friend or participating in a group fitness class.

Continued on page 2





MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Brain Awareness Week is a great reminder for everyone to take care of their own brain health. It also prompts discussions about the state of research so that one day we can realize our vision of a world without Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

In *A Report on Alzheimer's Disease and Current Research*, Dr. Jack Diamond aptly explains that "research remains the key to finding a cure." He also suggests that while Canadian Alzheimer scientists are among the top ranked in the world, Alzheimer research has yet to be made a higher priority in this country.

In the past year and a half that I have been with the Society and spoken with caregivers, people living with dementia, their sons, daughters, grandchildren and friends, the question about research often comes up. So what are we doing to find more effective treatments and to find a cure?

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. funds research through the Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP), a peer-reviewed program administered by the Alzheimer Society of Canada. This includes supporting young Canadian researchers such as Michael Jones and Terri Petkau who are aiming to improve dementia treatment therapies (see page 4).

The Canada-wide federation of provincial Alzheimer societies and national office are advocating to the federal government to develop a national strategy, something our American neighbours have already accomplished when President Obama signed the *National Alzheimer's Project Act* into law.

Research is the key to finding a cure, and we know that there is a rising tide of dementia on the horizon; more needs to be done.

The Society has made the strategic decision to increase our funding of research. Your donations and continued support will enhance the work being done by talented young scientists to find the causes and a cure.

Jean Blake

Jean Blake
CEO
Alzheimer Society of B.C.

THE BASICS OF BETTER BRAIN HEALTH

(Continued from cover)

Eat responsibly. Diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity are all risk factors for Alzheimer's disease. There is solid evidence from animal studies that a rigorously controlled caloric restricted diet dramatically slows the aging process.

Although researchers are still trying to understand how these findings can be applied to humans, it is important to keep your food portions reasonable and don't super-size it!

Break out of your routine. Try taking a different route to the store, change the order of your morning routine or simply brush your teeth with your less dominant hand.

Research shows that building new connections between brain cells (neural pathways) is key to maintaining brain health. When you do the same things in new ways or learn a new skill, you're actually creating new pathways in your brain helping it to be more resilient to later chemical or physical changes.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. offers brain health workshops throughout the province. Visit our website at www.alzheimerbc.org and click on "In My Community" to learn about upcoming workshops in your area.



HEALTHY BRAIN SHOPPING LIST

A healthy diet provides the fuel and nutrients that our bodies need to function efficiently, maintain general health, and provide energy. Below is a list of some foods that you may want to include in your diet:

Fruit, nuts, and vegetables. There is an important antioxidant, quercetin, essential for memory that is found in the skin of apples and berries – especially blueberries and cranberries. To get the benefits, you need to eat two or three helpings of these fruits each day, or drink two eight-ounce glasses of apple juice.

Green leafy vegetables, bananas, and oranges are rich in folic acid. Some studies have found that people who ingest a lot of folic acid and have high levels in their blood are significantly less at risk of developing dementia.

Foods rich in Omega 3 fats such as soy products, coldwater fish, flax seed oil, and walnuts are all good for overall health and support good mental fitness. There is evidence that these fats can promote a healthy heart – and we know that what's good for the heart is good for the brain!

Proteins found in meat, fish and soy products are necessary for the B vitamins. People with Alzheimer's and other dementias often have very low levels of B12 in their blood stream. Vitamin B6 and B12 are essential to keeping our heart, circulation systems, and brain healthy.

Adapted from an article that appeared in *In Touch* an education bulletin for caregivers published by the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

CARING FOR PARENTS WITH DEMENTIA

Over coffee and cake Dolores shared with me what she expected mid-life to look like: she and her husband Bill of 40 years enjoying a carefree, blissful life together. Then she shared with me her reality.

Both of Dolores' parents were diagnosed with dementia and she has spent 10 exhausting years as a caregiver.

"I was working full-time but in order to provide care for my parents I would drive hundreds of kilometers a week between Abbotsford and Burnaby, spending up to five hours a day helping to manage their finances, meals, coordinating help and doctors visits," explained Dolores. "Bill and I made a lot of sacrifices in order to provide that kind of care."

Part of the reality for Dolores was accepting the fact that her personal interactions with two dear parents would also change. "My mother was kind, loving, and sweet as a biscuit," Dolores said. "I couldn't believe it when one time she became so agitated in

her early onset Alzheimer confusion that she threw a can of soup at me."

Imagine the years of demands and the emotional roller coaster of guilt, resentment, anger, hate and love, sometimes all at the same time. Some days Dolores would cry the entire drive from Burnaby to Abbotsford, wondering how much longer she could continue to do this without getting sick. She ended up taking early retirement because she could no longer continue working and taking care of her parents.

"The Alzheimer Society of B.C. saved my life through their caregiver support groups, education programs, Dementia Helpline and resource centres," Dolores said. "I just wish the Society had more funds to do even more for caregivers like me."

Would you help caregivers on the dementia journey like Dolores? By making a \$30 monthly gift to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. you are helping to ensure there is care for caregivers across the province.

In a recent memory loss test, Dolores' mom was asked to "write a simple sentence". She wrote "I love Dolores."

Warmly with much thanks for your response,
David Walker
Director of Resource Development
Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Please give \$30 a month to care for the caregivers, or contribute any amount using the clipable response card below. You can also give online at www.alzheimerbc.org. Just click the Donate Now button.



Photo Credit: The Abbotsford News

"If it wasn't for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. I don't know what we would have done."
Dolores with her mother

RESEARCH: IMPROVING DEMENTIA TREATMENTS

The more we understand specific processes of how the complex system of the brain is altered by dementia, the closer we come to finding the causes and cure for the disease. Two B.C. scientists are aiming to advance Alzheimer's research to improve treatment strategies.

At the university's mountain-top campus, Simon Fraser University doctoral student Michael Jones is studying the interaction of metal ions with a specific disease protein in the brain.

"There is a close association of copper, iron, and zinc with the extracellular protein aggregates that is one characteristic of a brain affected by Alzheimer's disease," explains Michael. "My initial studies have demonstrated that these metal protein aggregates can be used to generate bioactive molecules and if its efficacy is validated, this strategy will provide a powerful targeting method for future Alzheimer's disease therapy development."

Across town at the University of British Columbia, Terri Petkau is exploring how a progranulin deficiency affects brain function, specifically in relation to the connections between brain cells

in certain brain regions. Mutations of the progranulin gene are common in frontotemporal dementia, which is the second most common form of dementia and primarily affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, the areas generally associated with personality and behaviour.

"The goal of my work is to determine what differences in brain function are apparent when progranulin is removed from the system," she explains. "One can imagine that a reduced number of connections in the brain would lead to disrupted brain function, so if our hypothesis is correct, then treatment strategies aimed at either increasing or at least maintaining these connections could prove beneficial for the treatment of frontotemporal dementia."

Each year, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides funding for the peer-reviewed, nation-wide Alzheimer Society Research

Program. Terri received the Alzheimer Society of British Columbia Doctoral Studentship Award and Michael was awarded a Biomedical Doctoral Award.



ADVOCACY: NATIONAL BRAIN STRATEGY

As a member of the Neurological Health Charities Canada (NHCC), a collective of organizations representing Canadians with chronic, often progressive, brain diseases, disorders and injuries, the Alzheimer Society is joining the call for the government to establish a National Brain Strategy.

The Society believes that the government needs to engage the provinces in order to develop a truly national strategy that would ensure:

- increased research dollars to answer critical questions about the brain and related conditions
- increased investments to enhance education and awareness about brain disorders amongst the general public and decision makers
- the development of strategies designed to help those with brain conditions live well; and

- that there is a significantly better quality of life for those battling brain conditions, enabling people to live to their full individual potential within a more tolerant, understanding and welcoming society – one with universal access to more appropriate care and supports

British Columbians wanting to support the call for a national brain strategy are encouraged to contact their local members of parliament and provincial members of legislature.

To find an MP or MLA in your area, go to the Advocacy section at www.alzheimerbc.org. For more information about the Society's advocacy initiatives, contact Barbara Lindsay, Senior Manager, Advocacy and Public Policy at 604.742.4918 or via email at blindsay@alzheimerbc.org.

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THANK YOU FOR WALKING!

Thousands of supporters around B.C. joined us in the fight against Alzheimer's and other dementias at the *Investors Group Walk for Memories* on Jan. 30.

We beat last year's record! Walks in 20 communities raised over \$630,000 to help ensure people affected by the disease have access to support and to bring us one step closer to a cure.

SAVE THE DATE!

Walk with us on January 29, 2012.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.walkformemories.com

2011 PROVINCIAL SPONSORS

Investors Group
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Photo Credit: Flora K. Gordon

Vancouver Walk 2011 honourees Betty and Bob Kellogg cut the start line ribbon to kick things off.

YES! I WANT TO HELP DOLORES AND THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C. PROVIDE HELP FOR TODAY AND HOPE FOR TOMORROW.

Alzheimer Society
 BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Leaving a gift in my will How to become a monthly donor

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THANK YOU. A tax receipt will be sent to you for any donation over \$15. An annual tax receipt for monthly donations will be sent at the end of the year.

Spring 2011

Cut along dotted line

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. (ASBC) is committed to protecting the privacy of people whose personal information is collected and held by ASBC, and we adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. If at any time you wish to have your name removed from this or another mailing, call us by phone at 604.681.6530 or toll-free 1.800.667.3742, or via e-mail at info@alzheimercbc.org, and we will gladly accommodate your request.

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PROGRAM SUPPORT

Organizations from around British Columbia partnered with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. to help deliver the programs and services needed throughout our communities. Thank you to the following organizations for your contributions:

Our Visionaries:

Margaret Rothweiler Charitable Foundation
Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.
Pfizer Canada Inc.
Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
Province of British Columbia
RBC Foundation
Vancouver Foundation

Our Champions

Frank & Yvonne McCracken Foundation
The Phyllis and Irving Snider Foundation
ALACS Fund through the Victoria Foundation

Our Leaders

Lohn Foundation
The 1988 Foundation

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Forget Me Not Golf Tournament

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2011

The 17th annual *Forget Me Not Golf Tournament*, presented by Canaccord Genuity, will take place at the Northview Golf & Country Club in Surrey. For more information, contact Vivianne de Pass at vdepass@alzheimerbc.org or visit the "Get Involved" section of www.alzheimerbc.org.

Scotiabank Group Charity Challenge

Date: Sunday, June 26, 2011

Sign up for the Scotiabank Vancouver Half-Marathon & 5K and go the distance for Alzheimer's. For details, visit the "Get Involved" section www.alzheimerbc.org or contact Vivianne de Pass at vdepass@alzheimerbc.org.

Flora Aasen Memorial Alzheimer's Pro-Am

Date: August 2011

Amateur and professional golfers are teamed up at this pro-am tournament, held each year at the Pitt Meadows Golf & Country Club to celebrate the memory of Flora Aasen. For more information, contact John Aasen at 604.716.4653 or john@3dgolfperformance.ca or visit www.3dgolfperformance.ca/pro_am/index.htm.

Ralph Robinson Memorial Golf Tournament

Date: September 2011

Come out to Skaha Meadows Golf Course in Penticton and celebrate the memory of Ralph Robinson who passed away from Alzheimer's in 2003. For information, contact Pauline Tadey at 250.490.0944 or tadeys@shaw.ca.

Coffee Break

Date: September 15, 2011

Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea for Alzheimer's! This fall brew coffee and sell cups by donation in your home or office. For more information, contact Vivianne de Pass at vdepass@alzheimerbc.org.

Ascent for Alzheimer's

Date: Sept. 26 – Oct. 5, 2011 - Tanzania, Africa

More than 160 Canadians have literally conquered mountains in the fight against Alzheimer's since 1998, reaching for the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,340 ft.) as part of *Ascent for Alzheimer's*. For more information, visit www.ascentbc.ca or contact Vivianne de Pass at vdepass@alzheimerbc.org.

SPOTLIGHT: A REWARDING WAY TO A HEALTHIER BRAIN

Two ways to promote a healthy brain are by keeping active and through social interaction. Volunteering can be a rewarding way to do both!

Passion, action, and impact are the themes of this year's National Volunteer Week being celebrated April 10 to 16. This theme truly describes our dedicated volunteers. They have turned their passion and commitment into action, and made a positive impact.

Every day our volunteers are making a difference for more than 70,000 families in B.C. living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia through a variety of volunteer opportunities at the Society.

This includes helping to coordinate and deliver key programs such as First Link®, to taking a leadership role in a local community for events such as the *Investors Group Walk for Memories*, or helping the Provincial Office staff to support the Society's province-wide network.

The time commitment varies for the different volunteer roles and may be ongoing or short term but the satisfaction of knowing you have helped is the same.

If you have time and energy to contribute and would like to know more about volunteering with us, details can be viewed on the Society website under "Get Involved" or by emailing volunteer@alzheimerbc.org.

