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Media Release – What's good for the heart is good for the brain - Alzheimers Awareness Month

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



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September is Alzheimers Awareness Month with events being planned across the country in order to raise the awareness of those suffering from this disease, and to also offer support to those who have family members who suffer from the disease.

In NZ dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of conditions that change and damage our brains. Alzheimers disease is the most common form of dementia, with two in three sufferers of dementia having alzheimers.

While dementia can affect anyone, it is older people who are most at risk as age is a strong factor in the onset of the disease. Up to 50,000 New Zealanders currently suffer from this disease, and alarmingly, these figures are expected to triple by 2050.

The most common symptoms of dementia include changes in memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotions. These changes affect a person's ability to perform everyday tasks and interfere with their everyday lives. For most sufferers the onset of dementia is gradual but the symptoms get worse over time. Dementia is not a normal part of the ageing process. However, it is more common for people over the age of 65, but can affect people as young as 45.

There has been no single cause linked with the onset of dementia, however research released in 2014 in The World Alzheimer Report suggests that there are some simple steps people can take regarding their lifestyle in order to reduce the risk of dementia in later life.

They recommend that: 'what is good for the heart is also good for the brain' and that any changes to lifestyle factors can have an impact, meaning it's never to late to start.

So to lower your risk of dementia and to improve your overall health and wellbeing today take these 5 steps:

Be Heart Healthy

By maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and eating a well balanced diet you will help prevent high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity in the short term and in the long term reduce your dementia risk. Smokers should quit, and those who drink alcohol should limit their consumption.

Get Moving

Physical activity has benefits for your heart, your weight and your mental health. It can also be a great way to get out amongst people. For reducing dementia risk just 30 minutes a day, five days a week is all that's needed.

Get Eating Real Food

A healthy, well balanced diet keeps our energy levels up and our risk factors down. A diet high in processed food should be avoided.

Get Thinking

When we think of exercise we should also include our brain as well as our body. Learning new skills and engaging in mentally challenging activities can help keep you alert and is successfully used for those showing signs of dementia

Get Socialising

Getting out and socialising with others stimulates our brains, and keeps us active and engaged with the world. Combining exercise with socialising is a great way to stay motivated to be active.

If you are worried about someone you love displaying symptoms of dementia, or if you are experiencing these symptoms yourself, then an appointment with your GP is the first step, as an early diagnosis means treatment and management can begin.

But don't wait for the signs, start now by reducing your risks by getting active and making healthy lifestyle choices today.

References and links:

<http://www.alzheimers.org.nz>

www.moh.govt.nz

Contact Details:

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Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction.

REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) -

www.icreps.org

