

7 August 2018

Media Release – The Exercise and Dementia Link

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



The Exercise and Dementia Link

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that affect how a person's brain works. 60,000 Kiwis have dementia & that number is expected to almost triple by 2050.

While Dementia can affect anyone, the chances of developing dementia increase as a person ages.

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease with two out of three of those diagnosed with dementia having Alzheimer's.

Symptoms vary between individuals but common ones include changes in memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotions which have an impact on a person's everyday life.

Dementia is progressive, with the changes that affect the brain slowly spreading and making symptoms worse.

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 too late to start making health improvements.

Maintaining healthy weight, exercising moderately and regularly and eating a well-balanced diet will help prevent high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity in the short term and in the long term reduce your dementia risk. Being a nonsmoker and consuming alcohol at safe levels can also help.

Just 30 minutes a day, five days a week is all that's needed to ward off a range of lifestyle diseases and conditions, and is the minimum level recommended to reduce dementia risk. When we think of exercise we should also include mental activity as well as physical. By learning new skills and completing mentally challenging activities can help keep you alert.

Social contact is one of the benefits of group exercise. Whether it's walking with company, taking a class, or heading to an exercise facility or gym, getting amongst like-minded people while getting active is a fantastic way to keep social and healthy.

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:

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

www.moh.govt.nz

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. 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 safe 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

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

