

## **Healthy Living**

People with Alzheimer's disease have told us some of the things they have done to make life a little easier. We share them with you as suggestions:

### **General Health**

Researchers are finding that certain mental, social and physical activities influence our brain health. Adopting a "brain healthy lifestyle" may help you feel better physically, emotionally and for some, may even boost cognitive functioning.

**There are four basic areas you should focus upon:**

**1) Challenge yourself mentally.** Find activities that you enjoy that engage your brain. Good examples are word games, puzzles or cards, attending workshops, playing a musical instrument and reading books. Find challenging fun activities that are suited to your individual tastes, abilities and needs. If the task is too frustrating or difficult, you won't want to do it.

**2) Exercise!** The single best thing you can do for your brain and cognitive functioning is to exercise. Scientists have found a link between heart health and brain health so watch out for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and try to exercise two or more days per week (doctor permitting).

**3) Eat a diet rich in:**

- a. Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, Swiss chard
- b. Omega 3 fatty acids such as salmon, tuna and flax seed oil
- c. Antioxidants – which are found in dark skinned fruits and vegetables

**4) Be socially active:**

It is important for brain health to maintain and expand friendships and keep in touch with friends and family. You may also consider joining a group for persons with early stage dementia.

The best brain activities are those that are social, mental and physical all at the same time. Examples of this are dancing, group exercise classes, taking a nature walk with friends. If you can think of other activities that you enjoy, try to do them regularly.