

# Follow all seven signposts as part of your everyday life



The beauty of the **Mind your Mind** signposts is the way they can work together. When all seven signposts are followed in combination as part of your lifestyle, that's when you will enjoy the greatest benefit, so

- ◆ ◆ walk the dog ... and talk to people in the park
- ◆ ◆ do a jigsaw ... with a friend
- ◆ ◆ play golf or tennis ... at a club
- ◆ ◆ enjoy healthy eating ... with family and friends

Your lifestyle and habits can make a big difference to your health ... and may reduce your dementia risk. Remember ... it's never too early to **Mind your Mind**.



## More research is needed

This information is based on the best research evidence available at the time of publication. Research is advancing all the time which means there will be new scientific information in the future which may mean a change to some of the suggestions made in the **Mind your Mind** program. Certainly more research is needed to progress the fight against dementia – research into its cause, its cure and the care of people living with dementia.

### About dementia

Dementia is a general term for more than 100 conditions causing progressive deterioration in thinking, memory and everyday abilities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. While it is more common the older people get, dementia is not a normal part of ageing.

### Contact Alzheimer's Australia for additional information

- ◆ Alzheimer's Australia's Paper 13: 'Dementia risk reduction: The evidence' 2007; and Update Sheets 9,10 and 11.
- ◆ Help Sheets and other publications on dementia, early signs, diagnosis, care and support.

[www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au)

**National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500**

National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government initiative

### Invest in your future – donate to dementia research

- ◆ **Online** [www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au)
- ◆ **Cheque** Alzheimer's Australia (Research Account)  
PO Box 4019, Hawker ACT 2614
- ◆ **Credit card payment** 02 6254 4233

Mind your Mind is proudly supported by:



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Disclaimer: It is important to discuss diet and exercise with your doctor. Alzheimer's Australia is not liable for any error or omission in this publication. Risk reduction strategies suggested as a result of dementia research findings often show results for large groups of people, and taking these steps may not affect the dementia risk of an individual.  
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## Follow the Mind your Mind<sup>®</sup> signposts

They may reduce your risk of developing dementia.



# Why you should Mind your Mind<sup>®</sup>

A healthy brain is important for many aspects of your life – your thoughts, feelings and memories, your family life and work.

It is not yet known how you can prevent or cure dementia, but there is a lot you can do to keep your brain healthier as you age. And adopting the **Mind your Mind<sup>®</sup>** lifestyle may reduce your risk of developing dementia.

The biggest risk factors for dementia are getting older and your genes – things you can't do anything about. So, it is important to do what you can with the things you can control – your lifestyle and habits.

**Mind your Mind** can't guarantee that you won't get dementia, even if you 'do everything right'. However, studies of large groups of people do show that those who adopt 'brain-healthy' lifestyles have a reduced risk of developing dementia.

## It's never too early to start to Mind your Mind

Whatever your age, start to **Mind your Mind** today. Scientists think the changes in our brains which result in dementia may start decades before symptoms appear.



# The seven signposts to



The good news is if you do these things you will be healthier, and may lower your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes - and of dementia.

## Mind your Brain

Keeping the brain active enhances connections between brain cells helping keep you mentally sharp.

- ◆ Do activities that involve new learning.
- ◆ Play mind games like crosswords, number and word puzzles, chess, draughts and cards.
- ◆ Read, write, converse, use a computer, learn a language, take a course.
- ◆ Pursue cultural activities like going to plays, concerts, museums, galleries.
- ◆ Keep up hobbies like jigsaws, painting, sewing, carpentry ... or take up new hobbies.
- ◆ Do activities around the house like cooking and gardening.



# Mind your Brain Mind your Diet Mind your Body Mind your Health Checks Mind your Social Life Mind your Habits Mind your Head

## Mind your Diet

A healthy balanced diet promotes brain health.

- ◆ **Reduce saturated fats**  
Choose lean meats, chicken and reduced-fat dairy products, and limit butter, deep-fried foods, pastries, cakes and biscuits.
- ◆ **Eat protective foods**  
**Unsaturated fats:** olive, sunflower and safflower oils, avocados, olives, nuts, seeds and fish.  
**Omega-3 fatty acids:** soy, canola and flaxseed oils, canola based margarines, fish (especially oily fish such as Atlantic salmon, mackerel, Southern blue fin tuna, trevally and sardines).  
**Antioxidant-rich foods:** prunes, raisins, blueberries, other berries, spinach, brussel sprouts, plums, broccoli, beetroot, avocados, oranges, red grapes, red capsicums, cherries, kiwifruit, onions, corn, eggplant.  
**Antioxidant-rich drinks:** green tea, tea, fruit and vegetable juices and red wine (in moderation).  
**Folate:** from oranges, strawberries, bananas, spinach, asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, lentils, dried beans, chick peas and wholegrain cereals.  
**Vitamin E:** from vegetable oils, nuts, green leafy vegetables and wholegrains.  
**Vitamin B12:** from meat, chicken, fish, milk, eggs.

For general health keep well hydrated. Water is the preferred drink.



## Mind your Body

Physical exercise encourages blood flow to the brain. People who exercise regularly are less likely to develop heart disease, stroke and diabetes. These conditions are associated with an increased risk of developing dementia.

- ◆ **Exercise aerobically** for at least 30 minutes each day. You can walk, dance, jog, cycle, swim, garden ... anything that gets the body moving and the heart pumping.
- ◆ **Resistance or weight training** builds muscle strength, coordination and maintains bone density.
- ◆ **Maintain flexibility and do balance exercises** like dancing, bending, stretching, tai chi, pilates and yoga.

## Mind your Health Checks

Having check-ups, treating problems as soon as they arise and following the advice of your doctor is important for general health and brain health.

- ◆ Check your blood pressure and manage it well.
- ◆ Check your cholesterol and manage it well.
- ◆ Mind your blood sugar levels and, if you have diabetes, manage it well.
- ◆ Mind your body weight and avoid obesity.



## Mind your Social Life

Being socially involved and participating in leisure and other activities with people helps maintain a healthy brain.

- ◆ Keep in contact with family and friends.
- ◆ Participate in clubs, social, cultural or other groups.
- ◆ Get involved in community work or become a volunteer.
- ◆ Enjoy conversation with your neighbours, friends or shop assistants.

## Mind your Habits

Avoid 'bad habits'.

- ◆ Don't smoke.
- ◆ Drinking too much alcohol is a serious health risk. If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation.
- ◆ Get a good sleep.

## Mind your Head

Protect your head to reduce your risk of dementia.

- ◆ Avoid head injury.
- ◆ Always use a seatbelt.
- ◆ Take special care when you are a pedestrian.
- ◆ Use protective headgear when riding, skating & playing sport.