



HOW CAN **ADVENTURE** PREVENT DEMENTIA?

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A stands for **Awe** and wonder. Seek out experiences that take your breath away. Continue to set meaningful goals. Give your brain a reason to stay sharp and it will!

D stands for **Diet**. What we eat plays a critical role in the health and functioning of our brain. Every soft drink is a bullet to our brain. Fast food, junk food and processed foods are toxic to our brain. Eat real whole food, and cook from scratch as much as possible. Fish, poultry, meat, eggs, dairy, vegetables and berries are all excellent brain foods. Drink 2 litres of water every day.

V stands for **Vitamin B12** and **Vitamin D**. Get a blood test every year to check if you have adequate levels of these two essential brain vitamins. Take supplements if your levels are low.

E stands for **Exercise** — walking, jogging, cycling, rowing, swimming and any form of movement that you enjoy stimulates the growth of new brain cells and new connections between brain cells. Aim to do aerobic/endurance exercise for 30 minutes every day. Equally important is strength training to maintain your muscles. The stronger your muscles, the stronger your mind. Lift weights, use bands, do push ups, get a personal trainer, or google 'strength training using my own body weight' to find hundreds of ways to maintain your muscles. Do this 2-3 times per week for 30-50 minutes per session. A dance a day keeps dementia away!

N stands for **Nature**. Nature is our great healer. For our brain and body to stay healthy, we need to spend 17 minutes a day or 120 minutes a week in nature. Visit a park, forest or garden and enjoy it with all your senses.

T stands for **Thankfulness**. Every morning on waking, reflect on at least 5 things you feel grateful for. Feeling appreciation for what is going well in our lives stimulates the release of neurotransmitters that maintain optimal brain function.

U stands for **Uplifting** emotions. Do what brings you joy. Do things you love with the people you love. Positive emotions increase our resilience and mental capacity, strengthen our immune system, and lower inflammation. All these factors improve brain health.

R stands for **Relationships**. Nurture good relationships. Cultivate a confidante, and find a community you want to be a part of and contribute to. Loneliness is as damaging as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Supportive relationships halve our risk of developing dementia.

E stands for **Education**. Be a lifelong learner. Seek out novelty and new experiences. Get out of your comfort zone. Learn a foreign language, musical instrument, art, craft or technical skill. Take a course in a subject that fascinates you. Read books on a wide range of topics. You don't have to be good at something to reap the benefits of trying something new. The process of learning, in and of itself, stimulates the growth of new brain cells and new connections. If you find something challenging, that's great! It means you're boosting your brain.

S stands for **Sleep**. Seven to nine hours of good quality sleep every night is essential for a healthy brain because sleep is when your brain detoxifies and rids itself of amyloid and tau (two hallmarks of Alzheimer's). People who consistently get less than 6 hours sleep for decades of their life have a 30% increased risk of dementia. If you snore, see your doctor for a sleep study to exclude obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA).