

Worksheet 22:

Health promotion and support

Eating a healthy, balanced diet: Suggesting healthy options when supporting people in shopping or when preparing meals. Making food appealing. Thinking of portion size. The Mediterranean diet is recognised as being good for heart and brain health. Making the link between obesity and dementia. Making the link between increased risk of dementia for Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities.

Giving up smoking: Sources of encouragement and support for the person. Signposting to leaflets and information from medical centres and pharmacists. Local support services to help people stop smoking.

Reducing alcohol consumption: Sources of encouragement for people to drink sensibly and avoid over-consumption of alcohol. Recommended NHS levels changed in 2016 and are now a maximum of 14 units each week for men and women, spread over three or more days. Alcohol is a mind-altering substance that can affect people's ability to carry out everyday tasks. Brain cells can be damaged by alcohol, making this a risk factor for dementia.

Exercising regularly: Sources of encouragement for 'regular' exercise. 'Regular' means exercising five times each week for 30 minutes or more each time. 'Moderate' exercise means doing an activity that leaves one somewhat out of breath, raises the heart rate and may make one slightly sweaty. Activities could include brisk walking, cycling, swimming or dancing... or anything else the person enjoys.

Maintain hobbies and social activities: There is emerging evidence that keeping socially engaged and having a supportive social network may reduce dementia risk. It will also make people less prone to depression and more resilient. Visiting family and friends, looking after children or grandchildren or pets, travelling and volunteering are all good for maintaining social contact and enriching cognitive experiences. Maintaining social and faith activities is recommended.