

# The UCONN Buzz



## ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS

World Alzheimer's Month is the international campaign every September to raise awareness and challenge the stigma that surrounds dementia. September 2018 will mark the 7th World Alzheimer's Month. The impact of World Alzheimer's Month is growing, but the misinformation that surrounds dementia remains a global problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alzheimer's Disease is the most common form of dementia, and in 2013 ["as many as 5 million Americans were living with Alzheimer's Disease."](#)

The science of Alzheimer's disease has come a long way since 1906, when a German neurologist and psychiatrist named Dr. Alois Alzheimer first described the key features of the disease now named after him. He noticed abnormal deposits in the brain of a 51-year old woman who had dementia. Researchers now know that Alzheimer's disease is characterized by brain abnormalities called plaques and tangles. Plaques are clumps of protein in the spaces between the brain's nerve cells. Tangles are masses of twisted protein threads found inside nerve cells. Scientists know what these plaques and tangles are made of. But they still don't know what causes them to form, or how to stop the process.

Research so far has offered good leads about preventing Alzheimer's disease and age-related cognitive decline. Still, more research is needed before we can be sure what's effective. Will doing crossword puzzles prevent memory loss as we age? Does exercise delay or prevent Alzheimer's disease? Will adding fish oil to a diet help keep our brains healthy as we age? Unfortunately, we do not have these answers yet.

"Scientists are actively investigating a wide range of strategies," says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH's [National Institute on Aging \(NIA\)](#). "Before we can tell the public that something will prevent Alzheimer's disease or cognitive decline, we want to make sure that the intervention is tested as rigorously as possible." Alzheimer's disease usually affects people 60 and older, but people with a rare form of the illness can develop the disease in their 30s or 40s.

"The biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's disease is age, and the number of Americans over the age of 65 is expected to double to 70 million by 2050," Hodes says. "We must find ways to prevent or delay this terrible disease."

While aging brains may not store memories or recall information as easily as they once did, many older people function well despite these changes. In fact, experience can help some older people perform certain tasks as well or better than younger ones. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are definitely not, as people once thought, a normal part of aging.

Recent research has identified a handful of approved medications are available to help treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. One, [donepezil \(Aricept\)](#), was found to delay the development of Alzheimer's disease for about a year in people with mild impairment. Unfortunately, no medicalizations appear to affect the underlying causes of the disease.

Some [observational studies](#) looking at different prevention strategies suggest that physical activity, social engagement and intellectual activity all may help prevent Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline. Controlling high blood pressure and diabetes may help. So may [omega 3 fatty acids](#), which are found in salmon and other fish. Many of

these strategies have already been shown to promote healthy aging and reduce the risk for other diseases. However, none of the studies to date has given conclusive answers when it comes to preventing Alzheimer's or cognitive decline. These strategies and many others are under further study. In addition, many drugs are now being tested in clinical trials.

"We wish we could tell people that taking a pill or doing a puzzle every day would prevent this terrible disease, but current evidence doesn't support this," says Dr. Martha L. Daviglus, professor of preventive medicine at [Northwestern University in Chicago](#).

Still, many of the healthy habits under study, like exercise, usually do no cause harm and likely benefit overall health. Smoking has been linked to a greater risk for dementia and cognitive decline, so if you smoke, try to quit. Chronic diseases, such as diabetes and depression, may also raise your risk, so be sure to address any long-term health problems.

Despite all the challenges, Hodes says, there are reasons to be optimistic. "Technology is advancing our ability to identify the gene mutations that may place some people at greater risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. Scientists are developing new imaging tools to allow us to map the changes taking place in living brains. We are moving closer to identifying the markers in blood that may signal disease onset, track its progress and test whether or not a medicine is working."

## HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

**Lutz Museum Fish Family Farm Day** - September 1, 9am till 5pm at Fish Family Farm Creamery & Dairy, 20 Dimock Lan, Bolton. Children of all ages can enjoy farm animals, hayrides, games, musical performances, vendor market & farm-fresh ice cream. All proceeds benefit the Lutz Children's Museum, members \$8, nonmember \$10.

**Stop the Stigma 5k & Fun Walk** - September 15, 8am at Natchaug Hospital 189 Storrs Rd, Mansfield. There is a timed 5K rade, and untimed 5K walk through a quaint Mansfield neighborhood. Proceeds will benefit the Adult Inpatient Clients at Natchaug Hospital. Day of registration is \$30, and online preregistration is \$20.

**Celebrate Tolland Festival** - September 15, 11am till 3pm at Tolland Middle School softball field, 1 Falcon Way. Food from local restaurants, musical entertainment, a kids' fun zone and informational booths featuring town departments, local non-profit and community groups and local businesses and vendors

**15th Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival** - September 16 from noon till 4pm on the Betsy Paterson Square. This event will host a parade, food, family activities and the headliner of the festival is Sinkane.

**Discover Outdoor Connecticut** - September 22, 10am till 4pm at the Franklin Swamp Wildlife Management Area, 391 RT 32, North Franklin. This event will have animals, demonstrations, archery, shooting clays, kid's activities, outdoor skills, and photo contest. L.L. Bean will provide clinics on hiking, backpacking, knot tying, water filtration, and kayaking. See various breeds of hunting dogs and watch them in action, and more. No food will be available during the event. Free.

**18th Annual Celebrating Agriculture** - September 22, 9am - 3pm at the Woodstock Fairgrounds, RT 169, Woodstock. A fun, educational day showcasing the benefits agriculture provides to the region, demonstrations, hay rides, farm tours, animals, and competitions. Free.

## BE THE FIRST TO KNOW



Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, EHHD, National Pediculosis Assoc, Northwestern Univ.



## Roasted Carrot Soup

### INGREDIENTS

1½ pounds carrots, peeled and cut into 2- to 3-inch pieces  
 1 onion, peeled and quartered  
 2 cups unsweetened almond milk  
 3 cloves garlic, unpeeled  
 1 (1 inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth  
 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper  
 1 cup water  
 Shredded carrot (optional)  
 Fresh basil leaves (optional)



### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, combine the carrot pieces, the onion, garlic, and ginger. Drizzle with olive oil; toss to coat. Arrange vegetables in a single layer on a 15x10x1-inch baking pan. Bake 50 to 60 minutes or until carrots are very tender. Cool slightly.
- Squeeze garlic cloves from their skins into a food processor or blender. Add roasted carrots, onion, and ginger; cover and process or blend with several on/off turns until the vegetables are chopped. Add almond milk, broth, and pepper. Cover and process or blend until smooth.
- Transfer to a medium saucepan. Stir in the water. Cook & stir until heated through. If desired, garnish with shredded carrot and basil leaves.

# September is National Head Lice Prevention Month

September brings the start of school for many children as well as the 32nd National Head Lice Prevention Campaign, sponsored by the [National Pediculosis Association](#) (NPA). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 6-12 million children get lice each year.

The NPA is calling for parents to stay especially aware of the communicability of head lice and take the necessary steps towards sending their children to school free of lice and nits (lice eggs). The NPA encourages parents to stay proactive, avoid the call from school, and assure that they are first to identify that their child is infested.

### Tips to Prevent Head Lice:

- Be prepared by knowing how to [accurately identify both lice & nits](#).
- Do routine head checks. Screen your child's hair regularly with a

quality lice and nit removal comb. It can take 2-3 weeks to experience itching.

- Advise your children not to share hats or hairbrushes. Lice can live for 1-2 days without a host and can be transferred through helmets, headbands, costumes, and anything else that comes in contact with your head.
- Lice are repelled by certain smells, like tea tree oil, menthol, eucalyptus oil, lavender oil, rosemary oil, lemongrass, and citronella. Choose a shampoo or add essential oils to shampoo/conditioner with any of these scents for added protection.

### Treatment of Head Lice:

- Requires using an Over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication.
- Laundering clothing and bedding in

hot water or dry cleaning to destroy lice and eggs is extremely valuable. Be sure to throw bedding, pillows, and the stuffed animals your child sleeps with in your dryer for at [least 15 minutes to effectively kill lice and nits](#).

- Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.

[Learn more about prevention and control of lice by going to the CDC webpage.](#)

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

