



Boost Your Brain

Parents' & Carers' Pack

dementia.je/boostyourbrain



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Introduction

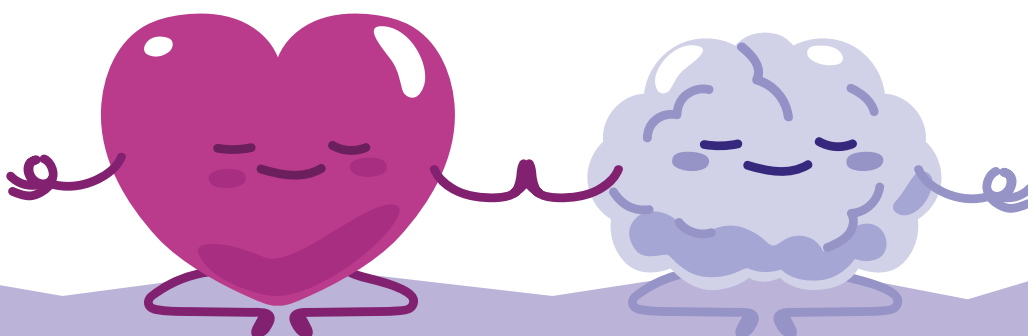
Up to 45% of dementia cases can be avoided with simple lifestyle changes. Loving your heart, keeping connected and staying sharp are all ways you can protect your brain.

There are things you can do, particularly in your 40s and 50s, to keep your brain healthy and reduce your risk of dementia in later life. And it's never too early to start!

Just like your heart, you can keep your brain healthy. Regular exercise, a healthy diet and not smoking are just some of the things you can do. Keeping connected with friends and family and staying sharp by keeping your brain active, are also important.

Whatever your situation, there are things you can do to look after your brain and protect everything that makes you... you.

Boost your Brain is a campaign by Dementia Jersey to increase islander's awareness and understanding that you can reduce your risk of dementia by keeping your brain healthy.



Discussing Dementia with Children

The idea of discussing dementia with a child or young person can be daunting. However, almost one in three young people know someone living with dementia – be this a parent, grandparent or other relative. Education can help to reduce their stress and confusion.

It's also important that we continue to improve education for all so that we can reduce stigma in society and drive forward changes to improve inclusivity to buildings, services, and processes that touch us all.

Alzheimer's UK has some practical tips for broaching the topic (see the links later in this pack).

Another way to improve your own confidence would be to attend a Dementia Friends training session run by Dementia Jersey – for free – regularly throughout the year. Check our website and social media for dates or feel free to give us a call.

Feel like the time isn't right, or your child is still too young to understand? Don't worry – this pack is focussed on activities you can do to support brain health. It's not essential to discuss dementia to do these.



Love Your Heart!



Move, Nourish, Thrive!

What's good for your heart is good for your brain.

Many of us know it's important to look after our heart by being physically active, eating healthily, and not smoking. But not everyone realises that this could keep our brains in shape, as well.

That's because vascular health is an important part of keeping our brains healthy, and risk factors such as having High Blood Pressure or smoking can increase our chances of strokes or mini strokes, which in turn make it more likely we will develop dementia.

Our hearts are also vital because they circulate blood around our bodies, which also helps to supply of essential oxygen and nutrients to our brains.

But you don't have to run before you can walk! There are some simple, achievable changes we can take to Love Our Heart.

Some things to try:

A family walk

Whether it's along the beach or around a reservoir, this is a free activity to enjoy together.

Obstacle course

Make an obstacle course in the home and time each other to complete it. Who is top of the leader board?

Exercise

Find a simple and appropriate exercise routine on YouTube and complete it together.

Water fight!

You might want to pit grown-ups versus the kids. Scared of the mess or don't have the space? A Nerf Gun (or similar) could be useful instead.





Stay Sharp!

Challenge Your Brain!

Keeping the mind, and therefore the brain, active is important for brain health and reducing the risk of developing dementia. But what does that mean?

Using your brain in new ways - learning new skills by studying, reading, or trying new things throughout your life helps to increase “cognitive reserve” and reduces dementia risk.

One way of doing this is through cognitive training which involves doing mental exercises that challenge and stimulate different aspects of thinking, memory, and reasoning. But that’s not the only way. You could also challenge yourself through study, by learning a new language, or completing daily puzzles. Whatever you do, find something fun that appeals to you personally!

Consider how you can share this with a partner or child within your family, too!

Some things to try:

Games

Board games and puzzles can be great for bonding - as well as good for your brain.

Charity shops

Visit one of the larger charity shops and give everyone a small budget – challenge the family to buy the most unusual or impressive item.

Visit the library!

Jersey Library has frequent activities on weekends and during school holidays and also welcomes families to explore the space and pick out books.

Star gazing

Gaze at the stars – or clouds. Find information on the internet (or in a library book) and see if you can identify patterns or constellations.



Keep Connected!



Stay Close, Stay Strong!

Keeping connected to the people around us is another good way to give back to our brains. When we see others, we make plans and have to stick to times, consider travel arrangements, etc. We learn new things and draw on our memory.

Juggling work or other commitments with family life can be a challenge, which we fully understand. Don't worry, keeping connected doesn't have to involve an entire day out – or great expense. Small tweaks to your homelife, can also be a benefit.

Keeping connected can also help us feel happier and healthier in general. This could be spending time with loved ones, having virtual catch-ups with friends further afield and making new connections by joining clubs or volunteering.

Some things to try:

Games

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Time together

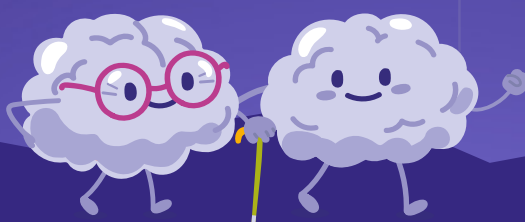
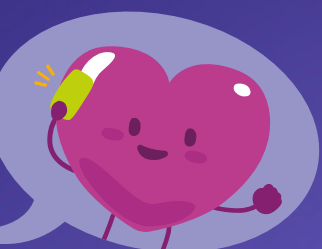
Pick one regular night a week to spend together and take turns to choose an activity (watching a film, playing charades etc.).

Create a soundtrack

Create a soundtrack together – choose songs together and discuss why you enjoy them or why they mean something to you.

Car-boot

Want to earn a few pennies as well? Why not take part in a car-boot or table-top sale together? Doing this means planning and organising together and working as a team.



Resources and links

Aside from this pack, several other organisations have produced materials for children and schools. Please note that we do not own the copyright to these resources but list them as possible additional sources of information or activities.

Dementia UK

Dementia UK is the specialist dementia nursing charity providing information, care, and support for families in the UK. On their website, they have a range of resources covering topics such as supporting children and young people, recommended books, and how to talk to children about dementia:

[Supporting children and adolescents - Dementia UK](#)

[Information for teachers and schools about dementia - Dementia UK](#)

Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's is not the only cause of dementia, but it is the most common. Alzheimer's Society is the UK's largest organisation on this topic. The society is comprised of people with dementia, carers, experts, campaigners, researchers and clinicians. They have packs of resources for schools, youth groups and families that can be downloaded by entering an email address.

[Download dementia teaching resources | Alzheimer's Society \(alzheimers.org.uk\)](#)

Brain Health:

[Think Brain Health - Alzheimer's Research UK \(alzheimersresearchuk.org\)](#)



**Dementia
Jersey**



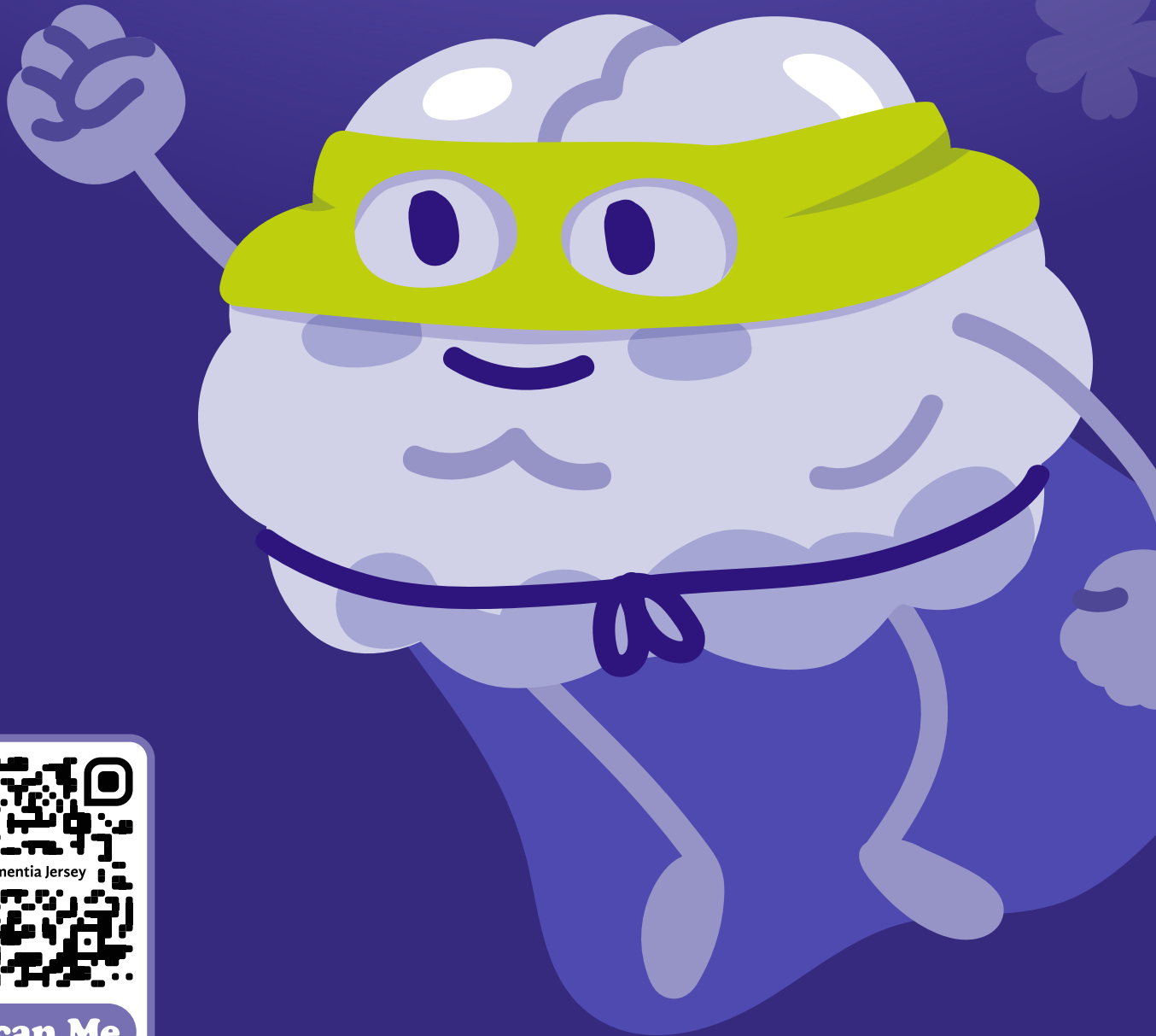
A local charity

We are committed to supporting people with dementia and the family and friends caring for them.

Our services include:

- Support, advice and counselling
- Therapeutic activities
- Social groups for people with dementia and carers
- Educational programmes for the local community.





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