

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT • 2ND DISTRICT

# Scott Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Jul 9, 2009

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## **MAINTAIN YOUR BRAIN – AN ACTIVE BRAIN IS A HEALTHY BRAIN!**

*Keeping your brain healthy as you age can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's*

We hear a lot from medical experts about staying fit – eating healthy foods, getting exercise, being in charge of our own health. But sometimes we forget that our health extends all the way up to the top of our heads.

Brain health is critical to everything we do – thinking, feeling, remembering, working, playing, even sleeping. And taking steps to keep our brains healthier as we age can reduce our risk of Alzheimer's disease.

I had the privilege this week of joining the Greater Michigan Chapter of the National Alzheimer's Association for an informational breakfast, where I learned about the "Maintain Your Brain" campaign.

Like other parts of our bodies, our brains may slow down and get a little stiff as we get older. And just like we have to exercise our bodies to keep them working, we need to exercise our brains to keep them working too. We all know that old and true adage – use it or lose it!

Keeping our brains healthy can't guarantee that we won't get Alzheimer's or another dementia-related illness, but it can reduce our risk.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and fatal brain disease. As many as 5.3 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's destroys brain cells, causing problems with memory, thinking and behavior severe enough to affect work, lifelong hobbies or social life. Alzheimer's gets worse over time, and it is fatal. Today it is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States.

Too many of us know someone who has been affected by this terrible disease. And as our nation's population continues to age, chances are that we or someone close to us will be affected in the future.

While the exact cause of Alzheimer's disease remains a mystery, research has shown that people with active, engaging lifestyles are less likely to succumb. What does that mean, exactly? It means staying sharp with challenging mental activities; engaging in social interactions; adopting a brain-healthy diet; and remaining physically active.

The Alzheimer's Association offers these 10 ways to maintain your brain and lower your risk:

- Head first: Good health starts with your brain. It's one of the vital body organs, and it needs care and maintenance.
- Take brain health to heart: What's good for the heart is good for the brain. Do something every day to prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke – all of which can increase your risk of Alzheimer's.
- Your numbers count: Keep your body weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels within recommended ranges.
- Feed your brain: Eat less fat and more antioxidant-rich foods.
- Work your body: Physical exercise keeps the blood flowing and may encourage new brain cells. Do what you can – like walking 30 minutes a day – to keep both body and mind active.
- Jog your mind: Keeping your brain active and engaged increases its vitality and builds reserves of brain cells and connections. Read, write, play games, learn new things, do crossword puzzles.
- Connect with others: Leisure activities that combine physical, mental and social elements may be most likely to prevent dementia. Be social, converse, volunteer, join a club or take a class.
- Heads up! Protect your brain: Take precautions against head injuries. Use your car seat belts; unclutter your house to avoid falls; and wear a helmet when cycling or in-line skating.
- Use your head: Avoid unhealthy habits. Don't smoke, drink excessive alcohol or use street drugs.
- Think ahead – start today! You can do something today to protect your tomorrow.

The Greater Michigan Chapter of the National Alzheimer's Association is one of more than 70 Alzheimer's Association chapters serving communities across the United States. The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research.

It is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to providing and enhancing care and support for all affected; and to reducing the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

For more information, please visit [www.alz.org/gmc](http://www.alz.org/gmc).

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*Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.*