

Healthier living NOW can reduce dementia risk

The Welsh Government and Public Health Wales are encouraging people in Wales to pledge to take six steps to reduce their dementia risk.

The second phase of the dementia risk reduction campaign launches today and aims to raise public awareness that you can reduce your risk of dementia and calls on us to ACT NOW:

- Active (physically and socially)
- Check your health regularly
- Try new things
- No to smoking
- Only drink alcohol within the guidelines, if at all
- Watch your weight.

The Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans AM explains:

“The risk of dementia increases with age and as more people are living longer, the number of people developing dementia will grow. These are simple steps that people can take not only to reduce the dementia risk, but other conditions including cancer, heart disease and stroke. The message is clear – don’t wait; act now to reduce your risk.”

One person who is determined to keep active to help reduce his dementia risk is 47-year-old Norman Parselle from Newport. Norman lost both his mother and his father to dementia, and is keen that others follow his lead to a more healthy lifestyle to reduce their dementia risk. Norman explains:

“When my parents were alive, my family made a big effort to make sure that they stayed active. Even when their dementia got quite bad, we would take them out and about. They played skittles regularly and always had music on at home. We managed to keep them living at home until the last six months before they died, so they could lead as normal a lifestyle as possible.

“Who knows what’s around the corner for any of us? But I do know that lack of physical activity, isolation and depression can contribute to the decline of people with dementia, so keeping fit and active, and socialising with friends may reduce the risk of getting dementia, and stave it off for as long as possible. That’s why, seeing how the disease affected my parents, I decided to get

involved with my local walking football club in Newport. About 20 of us regularly play on a Monday night, 6-7pm, in the sports hall at Llanwern High School. I enjoy the banter and camaraderie that we have, and, it still has an element of light-hearted competitiveness, keeps me fit, and is lots of fun.”

The campaign is being supported with a 10-day roadshow across Wales to provide help and advice on how people can reduce their risk of dementia. Key roadshow venues include:

- St. David’s Shopping Centre in Cardiff on Saturday 11th February 2017
- Aberystwyth Arts Centre in Ceredigion on Wednesday 15th February 2017
- The Quadrant Shopping Centre in Swansea on Saturday 18th February 2017

For those who can’t make it to a roadshow they can get lots of information and tips to get them started by searching for Change4Life Wales on Facebook and Twitter.

For information on walking football clubs and other initiatives in your local area, visit change4lifewales.org.uk