

USU Invites Community to Attend Second Annual Alzheimer's Prevention Health Fair



On Saturday, June 21, the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Research Center (ADRC), a state-funded research center housed within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services (CEHS), will host its second annual health fair focused on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia awareness and prevention. The fair is a collaborative project with USU faculty who have expertise in psychology, aging, neuroscience, nutrition, caregiving, and more. The event is open to the public and will be held in the Taggart Student Center, located on the USU Logan campus, from 10 AM to 3:30 PM. Parking on campus and entrance to the health fair are free of charge.

The health fair will be an excellent resource for people who are experiencing memory loss and those who care for them. Attendees can expect to learn about health and modifiable lifestyle behaviors to help combat Alzheimer's Disease (AD) and cognitive decline, discover strategies to reduce their risk of AD, and receive physical tests to assess health and lifestyle factors such as balance, hearing, strength, and more.

"It is important for people to understand what they can do now to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's Disease and to enhance their physical, cognitive, and emotional wellbeing," said JoAnn Tschanz, clinical neuropsychologist, professor in the Department of Psychology, and founder of the Alzheimer's Prevention Health Fair. "This fair is a wonderful opportunity for individuals to learn more about enhancing their overall wellbeing and discovering simple ways to mitigate cognitive decline."

Keynote speaker Nick Frost, MD and assistant professor of cognitive neurology in the Department of Neurology at the University of Utah, will discuss modern diagnostics and treatment for patients with mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's Disease. Frost's presentation will begin at 12:30 PM in the ballroom.

A major component of the fair is voluntary participation in an ongoing research study, Prevent Alzheimer's For Life Study (PALS), conducted by a team of USU researchers, with Tschanz leading the study as principal investigator. The study is now in its second year, and Tschanz anticipates data collection, assessment, and follow-up with PALS participants will last for at least five years.

In recent years, experts around the world have begun focusing on Alzheimer's Disease risk factors that the average person can impact with minor modifications to their daily lives. The interventions target diet, physical and social activity, cognitively stimulating activities, and other lifestyle choices. Results of such research have shown significant improvement in participants' cognitive test scores.

In fact, one recently published [study](#) funded by the National Institute on Aging showed that people who engage in and adhere to at least four of five specified behaviors have a 60% lower risk of developing AD. The behaviors in this study were engaging in physical activity, not smoking, consuming alcohol in light to moderate levels, eating a high-quality diet, and participating in cognitively stimulating activities.

Eleven lifestyle factors will be highlighted at the fair and are the backbone of the research being collected for the PALS study: diet, strength and physical activity, balance, stress and wellbeing, sleep, chronic pain, aging, social activity, cognition, hearing, and overall health. Attendees may visit booths that represent each of these factors and speak directly with researchers who can provide more information.

"A highlight of our health fair is that the booths are designed by researchers who study these particular domains," says Tschanz.

The research team includes USU faculty members David Bolton, associate professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences; Christopher Warren, associate professor of neuroscience; Heidi Wengreen, department head and professor of the Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences Department; Jon Carey, lecturer in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences; Maria

Kleinstaeuber, associate professor in the Department of Psychology; Naveen Nagaraj, associate professor in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences; and Yin Liu, associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. An external collaborator, James Richardson, MD and professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Michigan, provides support in the balance domain.

To enroll in the study and complete the necessary questionnaires prior the fair, email pals@usu.edu. Participants should be at least 55 years old and should plan to spend between one and two hours at the health fair to complete the research requirements. Additionally, sometime in the next three to six months, participants will be contacted via email to complete a follow-up survey. A gift voucher of \$20 will be given to participants who complete the requirements at the fair. Visit pals.usu.edu to learn more about the PALS study.