



Alzheimer Insight

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In Poor Taste!

by Shelly Zylstra, PhD

A common complaint for older adults is that "food just doesn't taste as good as it used to". You may be surprised to discover that there are some physical and biochemical reasons for the changes associated with your sense of taste.

Most of us are aware that the way food tastes is closely linked to our ability to smell. When we have sinus congestion from allergies or a cold, our ability to taste is dramatically changed. While your tongue can differentiate between sweet, salty, bitter, and sour, many of the nuances associated with the taste of food, come from your nose!

The ability to taste and smell slowly declines with age. Nearly 50% of people between ages of 65 and 80 experience some loss of smell resulting in changes in their ability to taste. To add insult to injury, all of us lose taste buds as we age. Taste buds diminish in number starting at around age 50 but also diminish in quality at the same time. It has been estimated that by age 75, we are able to taste less than half of what we were able to taste when we were younger.

Aside from the physical loss of taste buds and nasal problems, there can be some conditions that can contribute to a loss of your sense of taste. Nasal polyps, gingivitis, mouth dryness, infections in your throat or sinuses, Sjogren Syndrome, heavy smoking, Bell's Palsy, and a Vitamin B12 or Zinc deficiency can contribute. Several medications and radiation treatments commonly affect your ability to taste foods. Some new information

indicates that a loss of taste may indicate the existence of some degenerative nervous disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, or Korsakoff's psychosis. If loss of taste is sudden, associated with a new medication, or accompanied with a change in other abilities or senses, it is important to talk to your physician about the change.

The first taste senses to become impaired are sweet and salty which means that we tend to over-sweeten or over-salt foods. Your first indication that you have impaired sense of taste could be that you have over-salted the gravy for a family meal. While this can be embarrassing to good cooks, it can also cause problems for individuals who have high blood pressure and need to limit their salt intake. Sour and bitter remain a little longer, but over time, they can also be lost.

There can be harm associated with a loss of taste. Taste allows us to determine that foods are spoiled and may help us to identify foods to which we are allergic. Loss of sense of taste can interfere with interest in eating and may result in loss of socialization, low intake, weight loss, and/or malnutrition. Because impaired taste generally occurs over time, older adults may have very high intakes of salt, sugar, or condiments added to make foods more palatable, contributing to complications with existing chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes.

Can loss of taste be treated? In some cases, yes. Eliminating or changing medications which lead to loss of taste can quickly restore senses back to normal. Smoking cessation, antibiotic treatment of infection, and seeing your dentist for treatment of dry mouth or gum disease can all help. Sometimes loss of taste reverses spontaneously, but more often it is a chronic condition. Loss of taste can be helped by flavoring foods with herbs, low salt condiments, and using other enhancements to be certain that foods continue to nourish the body and the soul.

For More Information:

<http://www.smellandtaste.org>

<http://www.anosmiafoundation.org>

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/smelltaste/taste.asp>

Someone Who Cares

by Laura Hale

What Do Care Receivers Care About?

Comments and concerns from the *Staying Connected* program members—a weekly group for people with early memory loss or early dementia.

People with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia still care about other people! They worry about others who will go through this disease process and they worry about their caregivers. This occurs even when they have reached a stage of not knowing what medication they take, not knowing what their meals will be, saying that they don't have a memory problem and won't be able to contribute to the discussion. When they have difficulty retrieving language terms and difficulty expressing intimate, personal emotions, communication of emotional experiences may be lost. Sorting out ones' feelings and reflecting on changes is an important part of coping.

Some conversations among a group of care receivers can provide insight for all of us who care about people with Alzheimer's. Increased awareness may help caregivers and care receivers stay better connected with each other. People in the group come from many different backgrounds. There are a variety of personalities, as well. We have a discussion among jokers and teachers, engineers and managers, nurturers and curmudgeons, the shy and others. Some want to go dancing, some want to ride horses, some want to cook and some definitely don't!

The one thing that everyone in the group agrees on is this: They all share a commitment to contribute any information and experience they can to research. They all want to support successful treatment of future Alzheimer's patients. They all still have a past, a present and a future and they think about it a lot. Grieving the loss of their role in the family and caring about the suffering of their loved ones is the other common denominator, across the board.

One member started us off, "I don't think we spend enough time talking about our feelings...as a support group." We discussed the different things we try to accomplish in the group and reconfirmed that supporting each other through similar, difficult changes was definitely a part of our purpose. We voted to spend more time discussing our

reactions and feelings regarding changes from Alzheimer's. A question about where they receive emotional support and what other meetings they attend, triggered talk about caregiver support meetings: "Why do they need to have meetings that I'm not allowed to go to? Why?" one member asked. "Why can't we go there together?" She was bothered by the fact that she is the cause of her spouse needing this kind of extraordinary help and support. She was also bothered by these groups making it seem more her spouse's problem than her own. "Yes, that happened to me", another member identified with her. "The Dr's office called and asked to confirm my appointment. When I said 'I don't have an appointment', the receptionist said 'Oops, I'll have to check with the doctor'. So I asked my family member if they had a chance to confirm their secret meeting with the doctor, and they admitted it." "Why would they leave me out of a meeting that is about me?!" A third member added their disappointment, "Well, even when I go to the doctor, the doctor and my family member have a volleyball conversation right over my head, as if I'm not even there!"

Another issue around meetings and appointments came up: "I used to make decisions and choices without needing someone else's permission or cooperation. When I wanted to do something, I got up and did it, without working around other people's appointments or having the car or needing to be somewhere else."

The group members agree they are experiencing losses. Some of them agree they are grieving these losses. A few recognize that the grieving process includes anger. One group member said, "I want to talk about the anger. My skills have changed and that gets me frustrated, but changes in my relationships make me angry!" The group was reluctant to talk about anger. The member asked, "Do others feel this loss of decision-making and independence and control?" They joined in, "I love my family member and I'm so proud of them but when they take over everything, I hate them, too." Some concluded, "It makes me feel angry and guilty. I need to talk about these feelings."

Talking about the changes in their roles in the family and in their marriages brought up tears and guilt. Loss of their roles in work

and recreation are being grieved as well. Loss of freedom and enjoyment are also high on the discussion list.

Care receivers still care. They care about their pets. They care about their grandchildren. They care about their friends. They care about their families. They worry about their caregivers and feel guilt over being a burden, but they still want to maintain their self-respect. They feel it is part of marriage to still have arguments with their spouses. They feel it is part of being a parent to take charge and be responsible for their children. They don't always see their family members in the role of caregiver; they often see them in the roles they fulfilled in the past. They don't want to give up the roles of their past - roles they used to define their sense of self - they may also be unwilling to accept this new role of care receiver.

There are so many jobs in coping with illness that we often forget to make room for the process of change. The emotional fallout from imposed change needs some room and attention. Individual counseling and group support can help. Awareness of emotions that are being misdirected or boiling under the surface, unaddressed, may reduce anxiety, irritability and uncooperative bouts. Just realizing that a person, who is losing their cognitive skills, still has a perspective may ease some of the pressure in relationships.

Michael Verde is a man who works with a program called Memory Bridge. He shared some insight he has gained from a group of people with Alzheimer's. They had a new style of discussion program called Heart to Heart in the summer of 2007. Michael explains the perspective he has gained on paying attention: "...the attention that changes our life... When another person really attends to us, he is not trying to make us feel better; he is trying, rather, to feel what we feel, so that whatever we are feeling—good, bad, or worse than terrible—he is feeling with us, and thus whatever we were feeling alone we are now feeling together. The attention that connects us to the heart of another person is the kind we truly crave. More than being cared for, in the sense of someone doing something for us, and more than being applauded, we want to be connected to others, heart to heart."



Alzheimer Society of Washington *presents*

22nd Annual Fall Conference

Pre-Registration Required

Look at the Gifts in Dementia Care

Friday, October 17, 2008 • 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Speakers:

Geri Hall, PhD – *It's Not Your Grandparents' Alzheimer's Disease & Scheduling Your Day for Caregiving Success*

Elaine Peskind, MD – *Medical Updates & Diagnosing Different Dementias & Treatments*

Jolene Brackey, BA – *Enhanced Moments in Dementia Care & Enhanced Activities*

Gail & John Goeller, MS – *Strategies for Dealing with Early Memory Loss & The Hidden Gifts of Caregiving*

Christ the King Center • 4173 Meridian Street, Bellingham, WA

6 CEUs available

Special Room Rates Available no later than Oct. 4, 2008 at Holiday Inn Express, 4160 Meridian St., Bellingham 360-621-4800

Information & registration: (360) 671-3316 or (800) 493-3959 • Visit our website: www.alzsociety.org

Registration or Vendor Form Fall Conference, October 17, 2008 *Pre-Registration Required*

Please complete one form for each participant

Name _____
Agency _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

COST

BY SEPTEMBER 26

Members Early Registration \$45
Non-Members Early Registration \$65

AFTER SEPTEMBER 26

Members Registration \$65
Non-Members Registration \$85
VENDOR TABLES \$125

Checks: Please make payable to

Alzheimer Society of Washington
and mail to PO Box 4104, Bellingham, WA 98227

Credit Card:

VISA MC Expiration Date: _____
Acct. # _____

Register by Phone: 360-671-3316 or 800-493-3959

PLEASE CALL FOR RESPITE OR
SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

No refunds after October 10, 2008

2008 Spring Workshop

Caregiving Gems

By Teepa Snow

Once again, Teepa Snow has given us a dynamic program only she can give us. Her program related gems and their properties to five levels of dementia care and how to respond and program for each change. Over 250 caregivers attended the workshop and gave full attention to learning about her techniques of care. Teepa engaged everyone with her high energy and wonderful sense of humor.



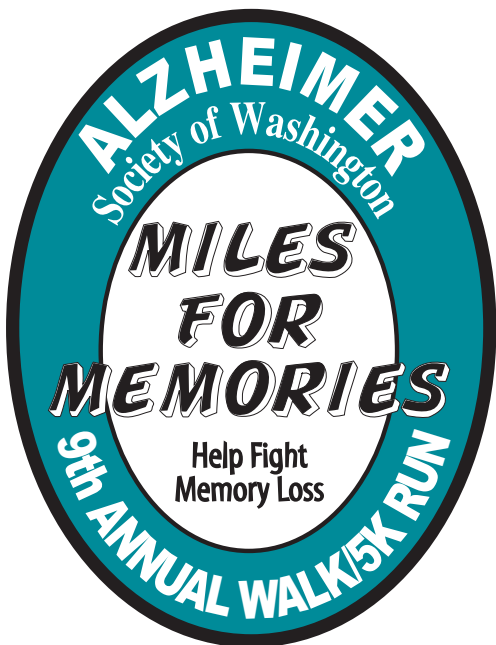
Teepa Snow (standing) making a point



Participants taking a break to visit vendors and have a snack



Teepa Snow (standing) with her hands-on approach to learning.



Miles for Memories, Walk & 5K Run was held at the Village Green in Fairhaven on Saturday, April 26, 2008, kicking off “Dirty Dan Days”. Over 600 people joined us to walk, run, and enjoy the sunny morning. The sea of people and pets decked out in their bright yellow T-shirts and bandanas was an amazing sight.

New this year was registration of canines. Wow! We didn’t expect such a great turnout of canine family members! We promise to have plenty of bandanas for all our furry buddies next year! And, we’re planning even more events and prizes for those canines next year as well!

The outpouring of community and individual support for the Alzheimer Society’s annual fundraiser was heartwarming. Over \$40,000 was raised to help the Society continue offering education, support, and resources to people affected by Alzheimer’s disease. Twenty-nine teams participated and the top three teams raising the most dollars were: #1 Navigators Team \$6,329, #2 HomePlace Top Hatters Team \$2,325, and #3 Unforgetables Team \$1,200. The individuals raising the most dollars were Catharine Vader \$1,000, and Rob Woods \$923. The Navigators Team, headed up by tireless Ed Wood, also won the traveling Big Shoes Award for the largest team—they had over 40 members, as well as the traveling Little Shoes Award for most dollars raised.

MILES FOR MEMORIES 9TH ANNUAL WALK & 5K RUN



Tessa Rhone, 1st Place Women's Division



Madison Heilmann, 2nd Place Women's Division



Cynthia Calderson, 3rd Place Women's Division



Brandon Rutledge, 1st Place Men's Division



Joe Barker, 2nd Place Men's Division



RJ Qualls, 3rd Place Men's Division



Congregating before the race



'Ain't No Other' Band



Judging all those great dogs



A field of yellow T-shirts



The starting gun



Mary's Little Lambs Team and winners of Best Team Costumes



A great day for a walk



Phil Jones receiving a gift certificate from Josselyn Winslow



Memorials and Donations

Memorials and donations received from March through May 2008

We make every effort to acknowledge all contributions and spell names correctly. We apologize if we have omitted or misspelled your name.

MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES

Marianna Brakke

Pierre & Elaine Lieurance
Millie & Bob Beckman

Melba Burnia

Dolores & John Andro

Pauline Charlton

Sheri Emerson

Willie Davis

Leola Sanders

Lyle Dickie

Maxine Bassani
White & Company
Janet Kaufman
Maria Vance

Frank & Cathryn Finlayson

Aylene Johnson
Marie Noon
Betty Smith
Ruth Hall
John Hunting
Dell Boswell
Robert Bryant

Charles Dumbeck

Frank & Josselyn Winslow
Jennie Sweder
Wanda Sweder
Fay Halverson

Irene Franklin

Don & Annetta Van Anandel

Ann Gansler Brown

Arlene Moldenhauer

Dick Faivre

Barbara Bavins

Georgina Gentry

Eileen Moreland
Greg Roderick
Burlington Rotary Club

Jeannette Hawley

Mr. & Mrs. Henning
John & Peggy Skinner

Jane Human

Lawrence & Janet Weisser

Barclay Jones

Pat & Chuck Wellman

Mabel Lang

Karen Tobiassen
Katherine Olson

Evelyn Massa

Elaine Bachman

Niels Schultz

Patricia Miller

Steve Solum

Mary Solum
Robert Pickering

Eleanor Stueve

Les & Joan Visten
Bill & Mary Johnson
Gene & Lois Backstrom

Johanna Webster

Sue Lingbloom

DONATIONS

Wanda Rush
Daryl Mobraten
Bernard Micalizzi
Mary Fritts
Ronald Roller
Joseph Netska
Katie Hollon
Robert Brimmer
Kenneth Leger
Richard Dewaard

Support Group Meetings

Subject to change, please phone ahead.

BENTON/FRANKLIN COUNTIES

- Kennewick** Callaway Gardens
5505 W Skagit Ct
Dorothy Lang
509-783-2239
• 3rd Thursday, 5:30-7:00 PM
Light meal served
- Pasco** Tri Cities Retirement Inn
2000 N 22nd St
Dorothy Lang 509-738-2239
• 2nd Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 PM
- Richland** Guardian Angel, Tudor House
245 Van Giesen St.
Mildred Walton 509-946-4581
Alexandra Olson 509-946-4239
• 3rd Thursday, 12:00-1:30 PM
Light Meal Served

ISLAND COUNTY

- Oak Harbor** Senior Center
51 SE Jerome St
Kristi Huffman 360-279-4592
• 2nd Friday, Noon-2:00 pm
- HomePlace at Oak Harbor
171 SW 6th Ave
Evelyn DeVries 360-279-2555
• 1st Thursday, 2:30-4:30 PM
- S Whidbey** Senior Center
Hwy 525 – Bayview
360-321-1600
Judith Coulter 360-678-3373
• 1st & 3rd Tuesdays,
10AM-Noon

SAN JUAN COUNTY

- Orcas Island** Orcas Senior Center
Janet Kidder 360-376-4950
• Every Monday, 1:00-2:30 PM

SKAGIT COUNTY

- Anacortes** Westminster Presbyterian
Church
1300 9th Street
Ann Giboney 360-299-9569
• 1st Monday, 6:30-8:30 PM
• 3rd Monday, 1:00-3:00 PM
- Burlington** HomePlace Special Care
204 N Skagit St
Nancy Gentry 360-755-1493
• 1st Wednesday, 3:00-4:00 PM
- Parkinson's Support Group
HomePlace Special Care
204 N Skagit St
Donna 360-755-1493
• 2nd Tuesday, 2:00-3:30 PM
- Sedro-Woolley** United General Hospital
2000 Hospital Dr. Room 502
Ginny Berube 360-671-3316 or
Jill Eelkema 360-856-7245
• 2nd Thursday, 3:00-5:00 PM

SNOHOMISH COUNTY

- Arlington** Stillaguamash Senior Center
18308 Smokey Point Blvd
Krystyna Simm 360-653-4551
• Every Tuesday, 10:30 AM-Noon

WHATCOM COUNTY

- Bellingham** Health Support Center
1212 Indian St
Madaline Lippert
360-671-3316
• 2nd Thursday, 1:30-3:00 PM
- Evening Support Group
for Adults Caring for a Parent**
St. Joseph Hospital –
Adult Day Health
809 E. Chestnut St.
Julie Johnson 360-676-6749
• 2nd Wednesday, 6:00-7:30 PM
- Blaine** Staffholt Good Samaritan Center
456 "C" St
Madaline Lippert
360-671-3316
or Aileen Reavis
360-384-3815
• 1st Wednesday, 1:30-3:00 PM
- Lynden** Lynden Manor
905 Aaron Dr
Madaline Lippert
360-671-3316
• 1st Tuesday, 10:30 AM-12:00



Calendar of Events

2008

Memory Awareness Screening 3rd Tuesday of every month

St. Luke's Health Education Center
3333 Squalicum Pkwy, Bellingham, WA
Call for an appointment: 360-671-3316
or drop in between
10:30 am and 12:30 pm

Evening support group
for adults caring for a parent with
dementia or memory loss.
2nd Wednesday of every month
6:00-7:30 pm
at St. Joseph Hospital-Adult Day Health
809 E. Chestnut St., Bellingham, WA
For more information contact Julie Johnson
at Northwest Regional Council:
360-676-6749

2008

Staying Connected

A free weekly program for people with
early memory loss or early dementia.
Call Alzheimer Society for information:
360-671-3316.

JULY 2008

Project Lifesaver

A public safety program to locate
missing persons with dementia-type
disorders that may wander.

Please call Alzheimer Society
for information: 360-671-3316.

SEPTEMBER 2008

Interviewing for Early Memory Loss Program

For information please call
Alzheimer Society 360-671-3316.
This nine-week program begins
September 19, 2008

OCTOBER 2008

22nd Annual Fall Conference *Pre-Registration Required* Look at the Gifts in Dementia Care

October 17, 2008, 8:00 am to 4:15 pm
Christ the King Center
4173 Meridian Street, Bellingham, WA
Please see page 3 for details and registration.

Visit Our Updated Web Site
www.alzsociety.org

Become A Member!

As a charitable, non-profit 501c(3) organization, we depend on your membership to enable us to provide memory awareness screenings for the general public; support groups for people with memory loss and their caregivers; educational resources; telephone and walk-in support; newsletters; educational conferences and specialized training programs for family and professionals. Our mailing list information is kept strictly confidential.

Please join us!

Membership Application

Please fill out completely, attach payment and send to:

Alzheimer Society of Washington, PO Box 4104, Bellingham, WA 98227
360-671-3316 800-493-3959 Fax: 360-715-9940 Email: alz@alzsociety.org

Membership is for one year.

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ Email _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- \$25 Individual \$40 Family
 \$40 Adult Family Home \$50 Service Agency \$75 Licensed Care Facility

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Walk/Run photos by Andrew Cannon

Alzheimer

Society of Washington

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Bellingham, WA 98227-4104

360-671-3316

1-800-493-3959

Fax 360-715-9940

E-mail: alz@alzsociety.org

Web: www.alzsociety.org

*We look forward
to your comments.*

*Please feel free to contact
the Alzheimer Society.*

STAYING CONNECTED



A free weekly program for people with early memory loss or early dementia

Join us for discussions, exercise, field trips, fun, new friends, speakers, and music!

Call Alzheimer Society for more information **360-671-3316** on this innovative group.

Eldercare Locator



If you need information regarding In-Home Care, Medical Assistance, Family Caregiver Support, Long-term Care Options, and General Resources for someone age 60 and over in any area of the country call, toll-free, the Eldercare Locator at **1-800-677-1116**.

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