“Know the Ten Signs of Alzheimer's.”

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life: forgetting recently learned information; increasingly needing to rely on memory aids or family members for things formerly handled independently.

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems: changes in ability to develop and follow a plan; keeping track of monthly bills; following a familiar recipe.

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure: trouble driving to a familiar location; managing a budget; remembering the rules of a favorite game.

4. Confusion with time or place: losing track of dates, seasons; forgetting where one is or how they got there.

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships: difficulty reading, judging distance, determining color or contrast.

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing: difficulty following or joining a conversation; finding the right word; calling things by the wrong name.

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps: putting things in unusual places; losing things and being unable to find them again.

8. Decreased or poor judgment: difficulty dealing with money; decreased attention to grooming.

9. Withdrawal from work or social activities: difficulty remembering how to complete a favorite hobby; avoiding being social because of these changes.

10. Changes in mood and personality: becoming confused, suspicious, fearful or anxious, especially when out of one's comfort zone.

If you notice these signs in yourself or a loved one, see a doctor. The dementia could be due to a number of things, including coronary disease or another life-threatening problem with blood flow. And if it is Alzheimer's, while there is not yet a cure, there are medications that can slow the progression.

For more information contact

Maine Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org/maine). The Alzheimer's Association offers many types of support to the person living with Alzheimer's and to their friends and family.

This information is courtesy of Western Mountains Senior College who ran two “To Your Health” sessions with guest speakers Mark Pechinek and William J. Kirkpatrick, of the Maine Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association.