

Reduce Your Risk of Developing Alzheimer's Disease or Other Dementias

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Research shows that there are risk factors that can increase the chances of a person developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease but they do not guarantee that you will develop cognitive decline.



Age

The greatest risk factor for developing Alzheimer's disease is age. As you get older, your risk increases, especially after age 85. When a person develops dementia before the age of 65, this is known as 'young-onset dementia.'



Genetics

There are certain genetics or genes that can place a person at higher risk for some ageing brain diseases. However, the majority of these genes do not guarantee that you will develop the disease.



Family History

A family history does not mean an individual will develop Alzheimer's. However, individuals who have or had a first-degree relative (a parent or sibling) with the disease are at a higher risk.



Lifestyle or Modifiable Risk Factors

Lifestyle or modifiable risk factors are often areas where we can have control and influence. These are things that can help to reduce our risk for cognitive impairment over the course of life.



Health Related Risk factors

- Blood pressure control
- Cardiovascular health management
- Tobacco prevention, stop smoking
- Diabetes prevention and management
- Obesity prevention and control
- Injury prevention
- Addressing hearing loss



Additional Risks for Caregivers

- Increased stress and strain due to role
- Demands of caregiving limit time for self-care
- Healthcare gets put on back burner
- More likely to feel isolated as little time for socialising
- Impacts to sleep, exercise, eating habits

Being aware of these factors and making even small changes to your lifestyle can make a difference over the long term.

Tips to Reduce the Risks



Exercise to promote cardiovascular health

Those who exercise have a lower risk of developing cognitive decline. 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week can make a difference.



Eat right to fuel the brain

Limit red meat and food high in saturated fats, instead choose lean meats and olive oil. Reduce your sugar intake, especially sweets.



Sleep and relaxation

Developing a sleep routine is essential as toxins are flushed from our brains as we sleep and it allows our body to heal tissue. Sleep also helps to consolidate and strengthen memory.



Maintain social connections

Studies have shown that those with the most social interaction within their community experience the slowest rate of memory decline.



Engage your brain

People who continue to learn, embrace new activities, and develop new skills are building and improving the networks in their brain. So stay curious and try new things.



Manage Stress

Chronic stress can do damage to the brain through cell death and shrinking of areas of the brain involving memory and mood regulation.

Focusing on the present and what you can control by allowing events to unfold naturally and thinking positively, can all help reduce stress.

