

ALZHEIMER'S / DEMENTIA REDUCTION

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We need to expand our awareness of the modifiable lifestyle factors that may have a profound role to play in reducing our risk of Alzheimer's disease

Genes matter, but a healthful diet and lifestyle help!!!

Greater dietary ***monounsaturated fat intake*** in women was found to be associated with less cognitive decline, offer protection against dementia, and enhance brain health.

Consumption of a diet high in saturated fat and simple carbohydrates may contribute to pathologic processes in the brain that increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Fish - baked or broiled - two servings per week, about 8 oz. total!

Healthy for your heart (omega 3 fatty acids, low in saturated fat & calories)

help protect the heart and arteries, lower triglycerides, improve blood pressure, prevent blood clots that can trigger strokes, and reduce heart arrhythmias – the leading cause of sudden death

Lowers rates of developing cognitive impairment or dementia

Omega 3 fatty acids found in fish oils, increase blood flow to the brain, combat inflammation and prevent the accumulation of amyloid plaques associated with Alzheimer's. They promote stronger neurons in the brains gray matter, by making the volume larger and healthier in the areas associated with Alzheimer's disease.

Mediterranean Diet may slow cognitive decline with age. Adherence to a Mediterranean diet is not only heart healthy, but fosters a healthier functioning brain. Persons most likely to adhere to such a diet had a lower prevalence of stroke, hypertension, and depression and higher baseline global cognitive scores. The traditional Mediterranean diet is rich in ***olive oil, fish, nuts, fruits and vegetables, and moderate amounts of wine and is low in dairy fats and red meat.***

Vitamin E, a powerful fat-soluble antioxidant may play a modest role in lowering the risk for dementia and Alzheimer's disease. It is found in ***whole-grain foods, eggs, milk, nuts, seeds, avocado, spinach, and unheated vegetable oils.*** July 2010

Vitamin D Low levels have been shown to increase the risk of Dementia. ***A level between 40 and 76 ng/ml*** is good.. (Ask to have your level tested)

Elevation in Homocysteine - an amino acid that is toxic to the brain, even a mild elevation, has been shown to have a dramatic role (doubling the risk) of developing Alzheimer's disease. ***A level of just above 14*** was associated with doubling the risk. Homocysteine levels are lowered with ***non-prescription B vitamins ~ B 6, B 12 and folic acid.*** (Ask to have your level tested)

Moderate alcohol consumption in people over 65 may reduce the risk of dementia.

Estrogen Therapy beginning in the peri and early postmenopausal years is neuroprotective.

Transdermal testosterone spray might protect the memory of healthy aging women. After 26 weeks, "significant improvements" from baseline were observed in learning (verbal and visual) and memory in the testosterone group. In contrast, there were no significant differences between baseline and 26 weeks in the control group. June 2011

Individuals who exercise regularly have a decreased risk of developing Alzheimer's. A recent report shows an actual increase in size of the brains most important memory structure, the hippocampus, induced by **aerobic exercise and brisk walking**. This is the area that deteriorates first in Alzheimer's disease. Also, research shows that exercise may reduce the beta-amyloid deposits in the brain that are believed to cause the disease. 30 minutes of exercise each day is recommended. Include **resistance training** to build and maintain muscle. February 2011
Exercises that strengthen the back muscles can help posture and shrinkage as we age.

Poor oral health may be a risk factor for dementia.

Studies have overwhelmingly demonstrated the **protective effects of higher education, engagement in leisure activities, and higher levels of the omega-3 fatty acid, DHA.**

Mentally stimulating activities may "square the curve" of cognitive decline by significantly delaying the onset of dementia. The reprieve may be followed by a more rapid deterioration once symptoms appear...delayed onset, shorter illness...perhaps a double positive. Activities include **watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, books or magazines, playing games, or going to a museum.** September 2010

Reduce copper and iron in vitamins...take zinc to lower copper levels.

Donate blood regularly

Alzheimer's typically takes about 20 years to develop before there are signs of memory loss. For most of those with the condition, symptoms appear before age 60.

What to watch for...10 warning signs

- 1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life**
- 2. Challenges in planning or solving problems**
- 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure**
- 4. Confusion with time or place**
- 5. Trouble understanding visual images and special relationships**
- 6. New problems with words in speaking or writing**
- 7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps**
- 8. Decreased or poor judgment**
- 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities**
- 10. Changes in mood or personality**

Tests are being developed to allow doctors to observe brain activity, and monitor brain inflammation. If inflammation is detected early, anti-inflammatory medicines may lessen it.