

CDC Recommendations:

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Reducing Risk of Alzheimer's Disease:

The Connection Between Lifestyle and Alzheimer's

Promoting healthy aging and reducing the risk of dementia is a national priority.

A [CDC study](#) of eight risk factors for Alzheimer's disease (high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, diabetes, depression, smoking, hearing loss, and binge drinking) among adults 45 and older found the following:

- Nearly half of adults had high blood pressure or did not meet the aerobic physical activity guideline.
- Adults with subjective cognitive decline—worsening confusion or memory loss in the previous year—were more likely to report at least four risk factors (34.3%) than those without cognitive decline (13.1%).
- 3.9% of adults with no risk factors reported subjective cognitive decline, while 25.0% of those with at least four risk factors reported cognitive decline.
- Several modifiable risk factors were more common among African American, Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaska Native populations than other races and ethnicities.

In addition, a University of Minnesota study attributed 41% of dementia cases to 12 modifiable lifestyle factors.

Among the 12 lifestyle factors, obesity, high blood pressure, and lack of exercise contributed the most to risk of dementia.

Reducing these modifiable risk factors could reduce dementia prevalence.

How You Can Reduce Your Risk of Alzheimer's

You can help reduce your risk of Alzheimer's by making healthy lifestyle choices.

(see next page for the CDC's specific recommendations):

Here's what you can do:

- **Prevent and manage high blood pressure**. Tens of millions of American adults have high blood pressure, and many do not have it under control.
- **Manage blood sugar**. Learn how to manage your blood sugar if you have diabetes.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**. Healthy eating and regular physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight.
- **Be physically active**. Physical activity can improve thinking, reduce risk of depression and anxiety, and help you sleep better.
- **Quit smoking**. Quitting smoking now may help maintain brain health and can reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and other smoking-related illnesses. Free Quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
- **Avoid excessive drinking**. If you drink, do so in moderation.
- **Prevent and correct hearing loss**. Make sure to talk to a hearing care professional to treat and manage hearing loss.
- **Get enough sleep**. A third of American adults report that they usually get less sleep than the recommended amount. How much sleep do you need? It depends on your age.

If it seems overwhelming to make all these changes at once, try making them gradually. For example, getting an extra 30 minutes of sleep at night, getting an annual physical exam, or simply taking a walk every day may make a big difference to your cognitive health.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/reducing-risk-of-alzheimers-disease/index.htm#print>

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