

There are 12 potentially modifiable risk factors that account for around 40% of worldwide dementias



How we can reduce the risk

Lack of learning 7% early life

Hearing loss 8% mid life

Traumatic brain injury 3%

High blood pressure 2%

Alcohol 1%

Obesity 1%

Smoking 5% later life

Depression 4%

Social isolation 4%

Physical inactivity 2%

Air pollution 2%

Diabetes 1%

Lack of learning

Early-life factors, such as less education, affect our reserve of thinking abilities – this is called the cognitive reserve. However, researchers think that mental activity helps to build your cognitive reserve.

Regularly doing the things you enjoy, whether that's reading, crosswords, singing, doing puzzles or playing an instrument, will help challenge your brain and keep you mentally active.

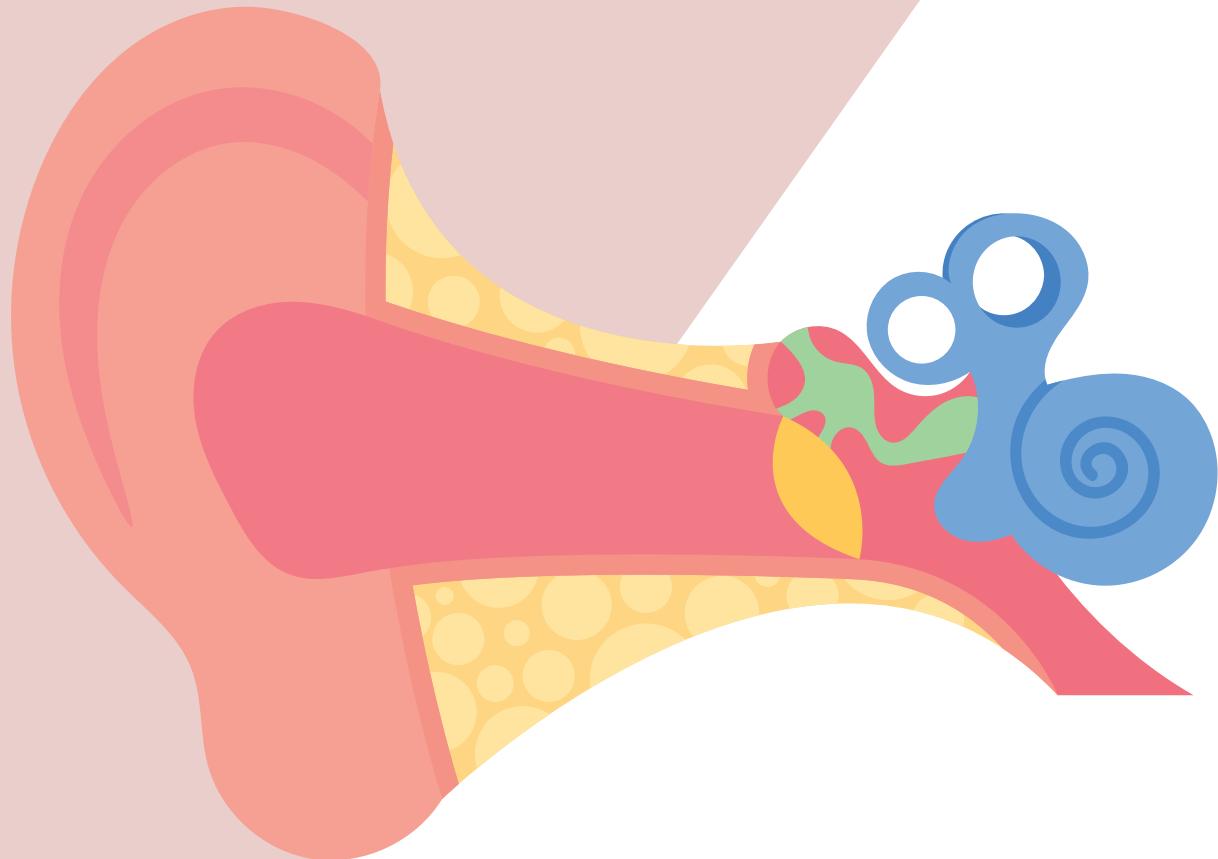


Why reduce your risk?

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate lack of education in early years, we would see a 7% reduction in dementia cases.

Hearing loss

Research has suggested that hearing aids may reduce this risk. It is therefore important to have your hearing checked regularly from mid-life. The RNID provides a free hearing check online at <https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/take-an-online-hearing-check/>



Why reduce your risk?

Research has found a link between hearing loss in mid to late life and the risk of developing dementia.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate hearing impairment, we would see an 8% reduction in dementia cases.

Traumatic brain injury

Wearing protective headgear when playing sports – cycling, horse riding, boxing, for example, is a sensible thing to do. Some research has suggested that a serious head injury, trauma or repeated concussion might increase the risk of developing dementia.



Why reduce your risk?

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate traumatic head injury, we would see a 3% reduction in dementia cases.

High blood pressure

Being physically active can help you reduce your risk of heart disease, including high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for dementia. If you find an activity you enjoy doing, you are more likely to exercise more often.



Why reduce your risk?

Research has found that identifying and treating high blood pressure in midlife may reduce the risk of dementia. It is important to have your blood pressure checked every five years if you are over the age of 40. You can have your blood pressure checked at your doctor's surgery or at some pharmacies.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate high blood pressure, we would see a 2% reduction in dementia cases.

Alcohol consumption

The Chief Medical Officer's low-risk guidelines recommend both men and women should not regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week. If you drink, try to spread out alcohol consumption over at least three days, with several drink-free days each week.



Why reduce your risk?

Research has found a link between regularly drinking too much alcohol and an increased risk of dementia.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate alcohol consumption, we would see a 1% reduction in dementia cases.

Obesity

Being physically active can help you maintain a healthy weight, reducing your risk of obesity, which is a risk factor for dementia. You are more likely to exercise more often if you find activities you like doing. Keeping active with others can make it an enjoyable social occasion. The Eatwell Guide shows what a balanced diet typically looks like and acts as a guide to healthy food choices.

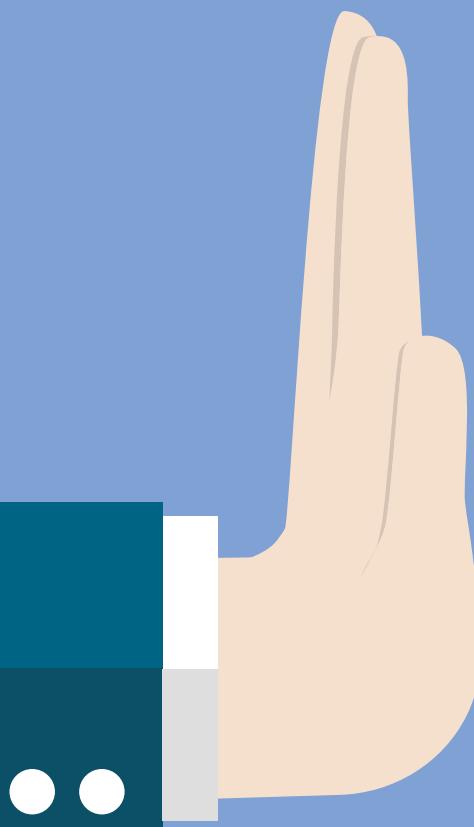


Why reduce your risk?

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate obesity, we would see a 1% reduction in dementia cases.

Smoking

If you smoke, quitting is one of the most significant steps you can take in boosting your heart and brain health.



Why reduce your risk?

Researchers have found that smoking increases your risk of developing diseases like Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Whatever age you stop smoking, it helps improve your health, so it's never too late.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate smoking, we would see a 5% reduction in dementia cases.

Depression

Keeping socially active by spending time with other people or joining clubs can be a good way to feel happier and more positive in life and to look after our brain health.



Why reduce your risk?

Depression is associated with incidence of dementia. If you need help speak to your doctor or mental health professional or call Samaritans' helpline on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org (response time: 24 hours).

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate depression we would see a 4% reduction in dementia cases.

Social isolation

Keeping socially active by spending time with other people or joining clubs can be a good way to feel happier and more positive in life. Social contact is crucial for our brain health.



Why reduce your risk?

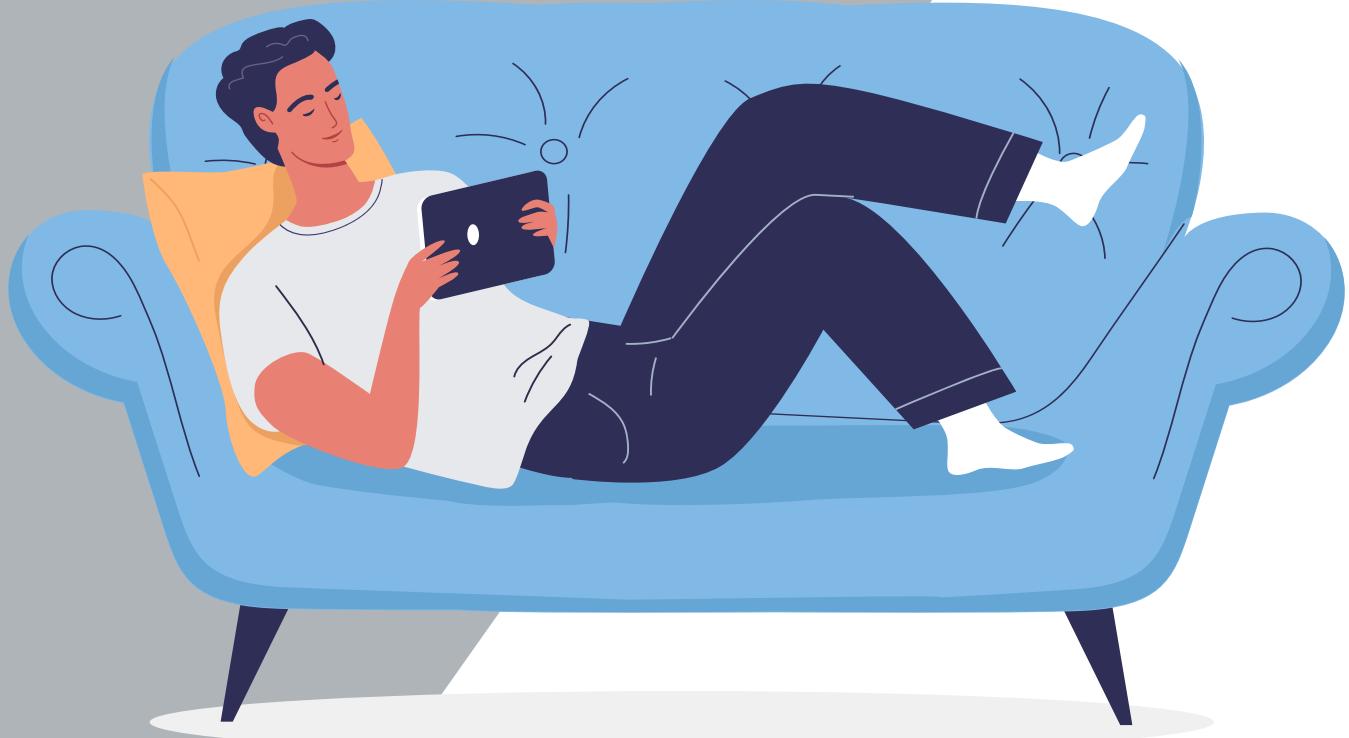
Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to a higher risk of dementia, although research is still ongoing to understand why this relationship exists.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate social isolation, we would see a 4% reduction in dementia cases.

Physical inactivity

Regular physical activity has many benefits, such as the prevention and management of many long-term conditions, including dementia.

Being active doesn't have to involve going to the gym or running a marathon. Find an activity you like doing!



Why reduce your risk?

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate physical inactivity, we would see a 2% reduction in dementia cases.

Air pollution

Getting out into the countryside when you can will give you a boost of fresh air.

Air pollution is not something we can really avoid, but we can make our voice heard at local and national government levels and demand cleaner air in our cities and towns.



Why reduce your risk?

There is evidence that air pollution is associated with poor health outcomes, including dementia.

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate air pollution, we would see a 2% reduction in dementia cases.

Diabetes

Regular physical activity has many benefits including the prevention and management of many long-term conditions, including dementia. Being physically active can help you reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes, which is a risk factor for dementia.

You are more likely to exercise more often if you find activities you enjoy doing. There might be activities you can take part in with other people, like walking, dancing or cycling.



Why reduce your risk?

The Lancet Commission Report (2020) stated that if we could eliminate diabetes, we would see a 1% reduction in dementia cases.

Information taken from the Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission

The Lancet Commissions

Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission

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