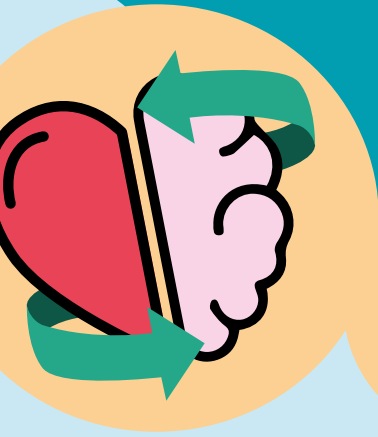


What's Good for your Heart is Good for your Head



Reduce the risk of developing Dementia

Keep socially active and try new things

Being socially active relieves stress, reduces the risk of depression, reduces loneliness and can improve your overall mood. **Keeping your brain active and challenged** throughout life may reduce dementia risk. Find something you like doing that challenges your brain and do it regularly e.g. puzzles, reading a challenging book etc.

Stop smoking

Smoking is one of the **biggest lifestyle risk factors for dementia**. Smoking doubles the risk of dementia by increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke. It also narrows the blood vessels in the heart and brain, causing oxidative stress which damages the brain.

Be more active

Doing regular physical activity is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of dementia. Make a start today, it's never too late and every minute counts! Work towards **150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity** e.g. a brisk walk, cycle or swim. Include strength and balance exercises too at least twice a week e.g. yoga, bowls and carrying heavy shopping bags.



Drink less alcohol

Regular heavy drinking can bring about serious damage to our brains. It is recommended to drink **no more than 14 units of alcohol per week** (equivalent to six pints of larger or one and a half bottles of wine) and spread your intake over three days or more. Try to have a few alcohol-free days too.

Eat well and maintain a healthy weight

A diet high in saturated fat, salt and sugar and low in fibre, can increase your risk of becoming overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese can increase your **blood pressure and risk of type 2 diabetes, both of which are linked to a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia**. Eat a healthy balanced diet following the Eatwell guide.

Have regular hearing checks

Having **regular hearing checks and using a hearing aid if required** can help to prevent you feeling isolated and reduce your risk of dementia. Hearing tests are cheap and easy to access at larger pharmacy chains and new hearing aid technology are very discrete to use.



Know your blood pressure

Did you know that **high blood pressure in mid-life has been found to be a key factor** in increasing your risk of developing dementia in later life, particularly vascular dementia?

High blood pressure rarely has noticeable symptoms and more than 1 in 4 UK adults have the condition, **so know your numbers!** This can easily be done through a visit to your GP/practice nurse or by visiting your local pharmacy.

