

Dementia risk reduction communications toolkit

Public Health England Yorkshire and Humber and the Clinical Network for Older People's Mental Health and Dementia are supporting our networks to promote consistent dementia risk reduction messages, focusing on 'what's good for the heart is good for the brain'. This toolkit, based on the PHE suite of resources on mid-life approaches to dementia prevention produced as part of its *Health Matters* series, provides key facts and figures, links to further resources and infographics that can be used whenever you want to focus on dementia risk reduction. It is designed as an 'always on' resource, but there are some national awareness campaigns with which you may consider relevant to link:

- Brain Awareness Week (March) <http://dana.org/BAW/>
- Dementia Action Week (May): <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/DementiaActionWeek>
- World Alzheimer's Month (September)/World Alzheimer's Day (21 September): <https://www.worldalzmonth.org/> Social media hashtag: #worldalzmonth
- National Dementia Carers' Day (September): <https://www.nationaldementiacarersday.co.uk/>
- National Heart Month (February)/World Heart Day (29 September)
- Know Your Numbers Week (blood pressure awareness) (September)
- Stoptober (October) <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober/home#k3fXC6HB8UgBCtb6.97>
- Alcohol Awareness Week (November) <https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/alcohol-awareness-week>

Social media

The following facts and figures have been produced for use on social media. The [accompanying infographics](#) from the Health Matters publication can be used to illustrate your tweets/posts (you can also find them on the healthy ageing k-hub).

The scale of the problem

Data	Sources
Dementia is a global issue. There are 50 million people worldwide living with dementia. By 2050, this is predicted to rise to more than 150 million.	World Health Organisation dementia factsheet
In the UK, there are 850,000 people living with dementia. By 2025, it is predicted that there will be over one million people with dementia in the UK. By 2050, it is projected that this figure will exceed 2 million.	Alzheimer's Society 2014 impact of dementia stats

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An estimated 21 million people in England have a close friend or family member with dementia. Directly or indirectly, it will soon affect every one of us.	Department of Health: A state of the nation report on dementia care and support in England
Dementia is also the most feared condition for people over the age of 50 more than any other major disease, including cancer and heart disease.	Saga survey
In the UK, 62% of people with dementia are female and 38% are male	Alzheimer's Research UK: Women and dementia – a marginalised majority
Dementia is the leading cause of death among women in the UK.	Alzheimer's Research UK: Women and dementia – a marginalised majority
There is greater prevalence of dementia among black and South Asian ethnic groups.	Alzheimer's Society demography stats The Kings Fund report: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities and dementia
The Alzheimer's Society estimates that the annual cost of dementia to society in the UK is £26.3 billion, higher than cancer, heart disease, and stroke.	Alzheimer's Society: Dementia UK second edition report

What are the risk factors for dementia?

Data	Sources
Age is the biggest risk factor for dementia. By 2040, nearly one in four people in the UK (24.2%) will be aged 65 or over.	Age UK – later life in the UK
Early-onset dementia affects people in their 40s, 50s and 60s. In the UK over 40,000 people under 65 have dementia.	Alzheimer's Society: Dementia 2014 opportunity for change
Smoking is one of the biggest risk factors for dementia. Smoking doubles the risk of developing dementia.	Alzheimer's Disease International ASH and PHE: Smoking and dementia
A lack of regular physical activity along with a sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk of developing vascular dementia, which is caused in part by problems with the circulation of blood to and around the brain.	PHE and Alzheimer's Research UK: reducing your risk of dementia report
Drinking above the recommended levels of 14 units a week can increase the risk of dementia.	PHE and Alzheimer's Research UK: reducing your risk of dementia report
Eating a poor diet high in saturated fat, sugar and salt and obesity in midlife increases dementia risk by increasing cholesterol and	PHE and Alzheimer's Research UK: reducing your risk of dementia report

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blood pressure levels.	
<p>Other pre-existing medical conditions can increase the risk of dementia, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkinson's disease • stroke • type 2 diabetes • high blood pressure • Down's syndrome • Poor oral health 	<p>PHE and Alzheimer's Research UK: reducing your risk of dementia report</p>

Section 3: What steps can be taken to lower the risk of dementia?

Data	Sources
What's good for the heart is good for the brain.	PHE and UK Health Forum – The Blackfriars Consensus
Around a third of Alzheimer's diseases cases worldwide might be attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors.	The Lancet Neurology - Potential for primary prevention of Alzheimer's disease: an analysis of population-based data
Around 22% of Alzheimer's cases could potentially be prevented if people were more active.	The Lancet Neurology - Potential for primary prevention of Alzheimer's disease: an analysis of population-based data
<p>You are less likely to develop dementia if you keep your mind stimulated and are socially active.</p> <p>A review of research found a 46% reduced risk of dementia for those with high levels of mental activity.</p>	<p>Research shows that a lower risk of developing dementia is associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher levels of education • social engagement • more mentally demanding occupations • cognitive stimulation <p>A review of research in this area combining the data from 22 studies and over 29,000 participants, found a 46% reduced risk of dementia for those with high levels of mental activity.</p> <p>Psychological Medicine: Brain reserve and cognitive decline: a non-parametric systematic review</p> <p>http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/brain-</p>

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	reserve-and-dementia-a-systematic-review/r/a1CG000000GZ3fMAG
<p>Being socially active can help to reduce dementia risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving your mood • relieving stress • reducing the risk of depression • reducing loneliness 	<p>Psychological Medicine: Brain reserve and cognitive decline: a non-parametric systematic review</p> <p>http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/brain-reserve-and-dementia-a-systematic-review/r/a1CG000000GZ3fMAG</p> <p>Local Government Association – combating loneliness a guide for local authorities</p>
<p>Visit One You for advice and tips on tackling behaviours to reduce your risk of dementia.</p>	One You

[All links checked July 2018. If you notice any broken/out of date links please contact Alison.iliff@phe.gov.uk]

Text to use in press releases, online and in newsletter articles

What's good for the heart is good for the brain and simple steps like giving up smoking, reducing alcohol intake, losing weight and taking regular exercise could reduce the risk of developing dementia in the future.

There are an estimated 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, 68,000 in Yorkshire and Humber¹, and this number is expected to rise as our population ages. But dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing and there is growing evidence² that as much as a third of dementia cases could be a result of modifiable risk factors such as smoking and not getting enough exercise.

Research from the National Centre for Social Research³ in 2016 found that just 2% of the British public could identify all the potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia, and just 28% could name a single one. This is why this Dementia Action Week we are focusing on the small lifestyle changes that could prevent or delay the onset of dementia and enable people to enjoy a healthy and independent life for longer.

With symptoms including memory loss and difficulties with thinking or language, dementia can disrupt not only the lives of people living with the condition, but also friends and family, who often

¹<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-uk-report>

²<https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laneur/article/PIIS1474-4422%2814%2970136-X/fulltext>

³<https://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1264339/d%C2%A3mntla.pdf>

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act as carers. The condition costs the NHS £4.3 billion a year, as well as a further £10.3 billion for social care. There is no cure for dementia, and so taking action to reduce the risk is particularly important.

Risk factors for dementia are similar to those for heart disease, diabetes and stroke such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol and high blood pressure, so *what's good for the heart is good for brain*. Protective factors are also important, including keeping physically active and stimulating the brain by learning a new language, doing crosswords and playing word games.

Activities such as volunteering and meeting friends can also protect against social isolation and loneliness, which are risk factors for dementia.

Programmes such as the NHS Health Check are specifically aimed at spotting risky behaviours in people aged 40 to 74 and referring them to support and advice on making healthier choices. The programme includes a dementia awareness raising discussion for those aged 64 and over, and this is soon to be extended to all those receiving a NHS Health Check.

PHE's [One You](#) campaign and the [How Are You quiz](#) can be used to evaluate different aspects of health and links to personalised tools that support healthier choices.