



## Healthy Habits

Evidence is mounting that a healthy lifestyle can keep dementia at bay. Crucially, it is never too late (or too early) to start looking after your brain health – and even small changes could make a big difference.

The Lancet Commission has identified 12 factors which, if eliminated, could prevent or delay **40% of cases of dementia**.

 <b>Hearing loss</b>	8%	 <b>Lack of exercise</b>	2%
 <b>Poor education</b>	7%	 <b>Air pollution</b>	2%
 <b>Smoking</b>	5%	 <b>High blood pressure</b>	2%
 <b>Depression</b>	4%	 <b>Diabetes</b>	1%
 <b>Social Isolation</b>	4%	 <b>Heavy drinking</b>	1%
 <b>Traumatic brain injuries</b>	3%	 <b>Obesity</b>	1%

The 28 world-leading dementia experts of the commission said that while it can be hard for us to change our behaviour, the potential for each of us to reduce our risk of dementia is ‘huge’.

For example, losing just 2kg can give memory and attention a boost, while wearing a hearing aid may help protect against memory loss.

## Genetics

A healthy lifestyle reduces a person’s risk of dementia, regardless of their genes.

Research shows that those who were genetically predisposed to dementia but followed four healthy habits were almost a third less likely to develop the condition than those with similar genes but an unhealthy lifestyle.

## The Four Healthy Habits

-  Exercise regularly. For example, two and a half hours of brisk walking or an hour and a half of singles tennis a week. (You can read more about exercise in our Exercise pillar.)
-  Don't smoke
-  Drink alcohol in moderation (no more than one drink a day for women and two for men)
-  Eat at least four out of seven types of food linked to a healthier brain. (You can find out how to eat your way to a healthier brain in our Nutrition pillar.)