

Clinician Fact Sheet: Risk Factors for Dementia

Patients rely on clinicians like you to provide current health prevention information. Research has identified a number of risk factors for developing dementia. The more risk factors a patient has, the greater the chance that the patient will develop dementia.

Many of these risk factors can be decreased or eliminated.

Patients often don't know that they can reduce their risk of dementia. Patients can choose to consistently manage a medical condition. They can also choose to eat better, exercise regularly and live a healthy life.

What can I tell my patients if they are concerned about developing dementia?

To reduce dementia risk, actively manage your medical conditions:

- If you have had more than one TBI, consider avoiding contact sports.
- If you have hearing loss, obtain a hearing aid and wear it during waking hours.
- If you are prescribed medication for high blood pressure, take it every day.
- If you have early diabetes, control your blood sugar levels with diet and exercise. Also, speak with your doctor and see if medications are necessary.
- If you become depressed, speak with your doctor about taking "SSRI" medications.
- Speak with your doctor or a nutritionist to make the best food choices based on your medical condition.

To further reduce dementia risk, practice healthy habits:

- Reduce depression risk by getting good sleep, exercising and being social.
- If you smoke cigarettes, choose a quit smoking plan that is right for you.
- If you are a heavy drinker, reduce your drinking to one drink a day.
- If you feel you cannot control your drinking, speak with your doctor about best options to control your drinking.
- If you are inactive, begin walking 10 minutes a day. Work your way up to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- If you are overweight, speak with your doctor or a nutritionist and choose a healthy eating plan.

Dementia Risk Factors

-  Traumatic Brain Injury
-  Hearing Loss
-  High Blood Pressure
-  Type 2 Diabetes
-  Depression
-  Active Smoking
-  Alcohol Use Disorder
-  Heavy Drinking
-  Physically Inactive
-  Obesity