



**Risk factors**





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## Below you can see which risk factors you can reduce and which ones you unfortunately cannot change.

***There are many factors that can increase the likelihood of getting dementia. Some can be altered, others cannot. For example, the risk of dementia is greater the older you become, but unfortunately you cannot change your age.***

Around 10% of dementia disorders which people under the age of 65 suffer are heredity. Huntington's disease and some variants of frontotemporal dementia are hereditary.

If you are over 65 when you get a dementia disorder, it will very rarely be heredity. When the disease is not heredity, you can try to reduce the risk of getting dementia.

### Risk factors that cannot be changed


Not all risk factors can be changed. This includes the following risk factors:

- **Age**  
The risk of getting dementia increases the older you become. Once you turn 65, the risk increases year by year. Although the risk increases, far from all elderly people get a dementia disorder
- **Dementia in the family**  
The risk of getting dementia yourself is greater if there is someone in the family who has had dementia. However, there are many people who never get dementia even though someone in their family has had a dementia disorder. A genetic test can reveal whether someone has the genes that can cause hereditary dementia disorders.
- **Down's syndrome**  
When people with Down's syndrome become middle-aged, many of them develop Alzheimer's disease.

### Risk factors that can be changed

You cannot change your age or the fact that you have inherited some genes that mean you get a dementia disorder. On the other hand, there are other factors you can change, such as:

- **Diet and exercise**  
Research has shown that lack of exercise may increase the risk of getting dementia. There is no special diet to prevent dementia or to reduce the risk of getting a dementia disorder. However, scientists have discovered that people who live an unhealthy life have a greater risk of getting dementia compared to people who eat a healthy and varied diet.

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- **Alcohol consumption**  
You have a greater risk of getting a dementia disorder if you drink large amounts of alcohol. Some scientific studies suggest that there is a reduced risk of developing a dementia disorder if you drink a glass of wine or a beer every now and then. However, the researchers have not yet come to a final conclusion because the relationship between alcohol and the risk of developing dementia has not been fully investigated.
  - **Circulatory problems and obesity**  
High blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, atherosclerosis and obesity increase the risk of getting a dementia disorder.
  - **Diabetes**  
People with diabetes are at greater risk of developing dementia, especially if the diabetes is poorly regulated.
  - **Smoking**  
The risk of developing dementia and circulatory disorders increases if you are a smoker.
  - **Sleep apnea**  
People who snore and gasp or stop breathing for short periods while sleeping may get dementia symptoms.
  - **Vitamin and mineral deficiency**  
A deficiency of vitamin D, B1, B6, B12 or folic acid increases the risk of getting a dementia disorder.
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