

Retiree Corner:
Reducing the Risk of Dementia

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Dementia can be a devastating illness for patients and their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Foundation Medical Advisory Board has published reversible risk factors for preventing dementia. Although these factors cannot overrule the role of age, genetics, and medical disease, they are avoidable risks that you have control over. The list includes:

- **Being a couch potato:** Inactivity impedes blood flow to vital organs and the brain, which is necessary to repair and replenish brain cells. So start exercising!
- **Tipping the scale:** Being overweight or obese alters insulin production in the body that can lead to brain inflammation. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, and other medical conditions that are risk factors for dementia.
- **Rising blood pressure:** High blood pressure can damage blood vessels in the brain and other major organs. However, hypertension can be tricky to diagnose, as there usually are no symptoms until your blood pressure is very high. It is important to have your blood pressure monitored and promptly begin treatment if you're diagnosed with hypertension.
- **Drinking alcohol:** Prolonged and heavy consumption of alcohol causes a specific type of dementia known as alcohol-related dementia. Researchers also note that individuals with dementia who drink on a regular basis typically have a higher incidence of confusion, delirium, and behavior problems.

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http://www.moaa.org/usergroup/usergroup_sc/usergroup_sc_rr/usergroup_sc_rr_2009/usergroup_sc_rr_090617.htm