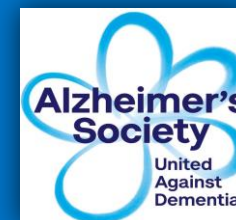


# Helping your brain to stay healthy

## The dementia component of the NHS Health Check

A tool for NHS Health Check  
trainers

(Updated April 2019)



**‘What is good for your heart is good for your brain’**

**‘Dementia is not a normal part of ageing - it is caused by diseases of the brain’**

# This slide deck is for trainers of the NHS Health Check

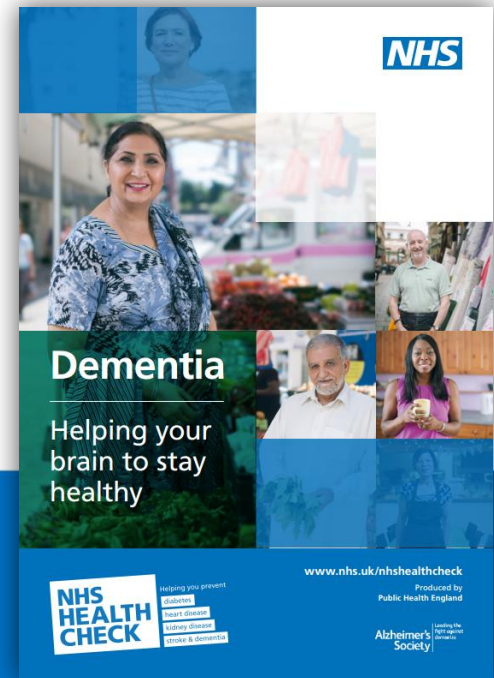
This resource is intended to be incorporated into, or to support current NHS Health Check training materials.

What do the following slides cover?

- What is the dementia component of the NHS Health Check
- Why dementia risk reduction is part of the NHS Health Check
- How to introduce dementia as part of NHS Health Check training

# The dementia component

- ‘What is good for your heart is good for your brain’
- A short conversation that fits within wider discussions about lifestyle, health and cardiovascular messaging
- All people who receive an NHS Health Check (age 40-74) are given information on how to reduce their risk of developing dementia.
- People aged 65+ also get information on:
  - Signs and symptoms of dementia
  - Signposting to further information



# What the dementia component is not..

It is not...

- A method of screening or testing for signs and symptoms of dementia
- A component that requires practitioners to perform a clinical test

# Did you know?

- Dementia is not something that just happens to everyone as they get older. It is caused by different diseases
- Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of diseases including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and dementia with Lewy bodies
- Dementia is a condition with no known cure, and is the leading cause of death for women and second leading cause of death for men in the UK
- Prevalence of dementia is higher amongst women, BAME groups and people with learning disabilities

# Did you know...

- 1 in 3 people with dementia do not have a diagnosis
- 1 in 3 people will care for someone with dementia in their lifetime
- Dementia is the most feared condition for the over 55s



# Why you might not want to talk about dementia

- Dementia is a complex condition
- You may feel you don't know much about it
- There is still stigma, fear and lack of understanding among the general public
- Dementia is different to other components of the NHS Health Check as there isn't a test or result to structure the conversation
- Some cultures and communities may not recognise dementia as a condition



# Why is the dementia component important?

- A third of cases of Alzheimer's disease may be avoidable by modifying lifestyle
- Currently only a third (34%) of the general public believe it is possible to reduce their risk of dementia
- Evaluation of the NHS Health Check has shown people attending want to know about dementia
- 'What is good for your heart is good for your brain' – the risk factors for cardiovascular disease within the NHS Health Check are also risk factors for dementia

# What information do you need to provide and promote to all people who receive an NHS Health Check (age 40-74)?

- ‘What is good for your heart is good for your brain’ and ‘Dementia is not a normal part of ageing’
- There are ways to reduce the risk of developing dementia. Many of these are common to cardiovascular risk
- Actions to reduce the risk of developing dementia are:
  - Regular exercise
  - Not smoking
  - Healthy balanced diet
  - Maintaining a healthy weight
  - Not drinking too much
  - Keeping socially and mentally active
- Managing blood pressure, depression and diabetes also helps to reduce the risk of dementia.

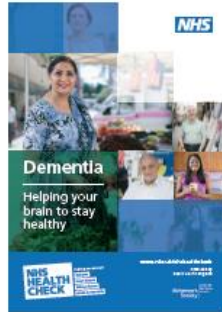
# What information do you need to also provide and promote to people aged 65+ who receive an NHS Health Check?

- Signs of dementia are not limited to memory loss but may include:
  - Difficulties with familiar tasks
  - Problems following conversations
  - Changes in mood and personality
- For further information people receiving an NHS Health Check should be directed to Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Research UK or their local GP



# How might you go about it?

- The 'Dementia – Helping your brain to stay healthy' leaflet is an ideal tool to help structure a conversation
- See the leaflet walk through guide for practitioners on the NHS Health Check website



## How to use the NHS Health Check dementia leaflet in your appointments

This leaflet should be available to use in every NHS Health Check appointment with any client aged 65-74 years old.

You can use it to help structure your conversation about dementia with a client.

**What is dementia?**  
This explains that dementia is an umbrella term for several diseases which affect the way the brain works

**Myths about dementia**  
Useful if you get any tricky questions

**Symptoms of dementia**  
Lists common symptoms of dementia

You can order more leaflets at the Department of Health Orderline: <https://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk> and quote 2904520

**Reducing the risk of developing dementia**  
A great way to introduce the topic when talking about wider cardiovascular health - what is good for your heart is good for your brain

**Why have we written this leaflet?**  
The NHS wants to help you become healthier. This could lower the chances of getting dementia - a long-term condition that affects the brain. Many people don't know that what they do every day can help keep a healthy brain. The good news is that it's never too late to start.

**What is dementia?**  
Dementia affects the way the brain normally works. This makes it difficult to do things like remember names, learn new things or make plans. Most people who have dementia often forget things as they go along.

**Myths about dementia**  
There are a lot of different types of dementia, and each one can affect you in a different way. Some people get dementia when they are young, but most people get it when they are older. Dementia affects about 850,000 people in the UK. This is as many as the entire population of Liverpool and Manchester. Most older people do not get dementia. But those people who are diagnosed are usually over 65. It cannot be cured but you can reduce the chances of getting dementia. Start if you can. It can help you live longer and better.

**Symptoms of dementia**  
This symptoms of dementia checklist can help you to see if you have any of the signs. It can also help you to see if you need to see a doctor. For more information, see the leaflet on symptoms of dementia.

**Reducing your risk of dementia**  
There are many things you can do to reduce your risk of getting dementia. The NHS website has a list of things you can do to help you stay healthy and reduce your risk of dementia.

**Eat healthily and maintain a healthy weight**  
A healthy diet will help reduce the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other health conditions that can lead to dementia. Try to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, and avoid fatty and sugary foods. Also, avoid smoking and drinking too much alcohol.

**Don't drink too much alcohol**  
There are no safe levels for drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol can lead to liver and brain damage. Drinking too much alcohol can also lead to dementia. Try to limit your alcohol intake to no more than 14 units per week.

**Be physically active**  
Being physically active will help reduce your risk of dementia. It will also help you to stay healthy and reduce your risk of dementia. Try to get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise every week.

**Connect with people around you**  
Staying mentally and socially active will help you to stay healthy and reduce your risk of dementia. Try to stay connected with friends and family, and join a club or group.

**Managing your health**  
If you have any health conditions, it's important to manage them well. This can help you to stay healthy and reduce your risk of dementia. Try to take your medicine as prescribed, and see your doctor if you have any problems.

**Signposting for further information and support**  
If you need more information or support, there are several places you can go. The NHS website has a lot of information, and you can also contact your GP or a dementia support group.



# How might you go about it?

## Video resources

- [Videos](#) – how to do it well
  - A practice example
  - A walk through the dementia leaflet
  - What the dementia component is not
- Angela Rippon explains things we can do in midlife to reduce dementia risk in this [video](#)

# What should be completed by the end of the NHS Health Check?

For all people receiving an NHS Health Check:

- Dementia risk reduction has been part of the conversation
- The link made between the risk factors for cardiovascular health and dementia

For people aged 65+:

- Informed of the signs and symptoms of dementia
- Signposted to third sector or local healthy lifestyle groups
- Given the dementia [leaflet](#)



# Further links and resources

- NHS Health Check website dementia training [page](#), including online training
- Dementia NHS Health Check [leaflet](#)
- References and sources of statistics in this document ([factsheet](#))
- Health Education England E-learning for Healthcare [resources](#) on dementia
- [HEE Person centred care - dementia](#)
- Dementia Core Skills Education and Training [Framework](#) (see from p.21)
- Information about Dementia on [NHS.net](#)
- [Dementia Connect](#) – Alzheimer’s Society directory of local dementia services
- [‘Reducing the risk’](#) – Alzheimer’s Research UK leaflet on dementia risk reduction.
- [Health matters](#): midlife approaches to reduce dementia risk – Public Health England
- [Dementia-Reducing Your Risk](#)- Alzheimer’s Society booklet