

Wherever possible, please include: 'If this story has prompted any questions or concerns, please call the **National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500** (24 hours a day, seven days a week) or visit **dementia.org.au**.'

Friday 2 August 2024

New Lancet report reinforces importance of brain health no matter your age

Research from the 2024 update of the Lancet Commission on the prevention, treatment and care of dementia this week reports that almost half of dementia cases worldwide could be prevented or delayed, as experts named 14 risk modifiable factors.

Dementia Australia Executive Director Services, Advocacy and Research Dr Kaele Stokes said it is vital there is increased awareness about these risk factors through preventative public health promotion and further investment in research.

"While we cannot change getting older, genetics or family history, scientific research suggests that changing certain health habits may make a big difference to reducing or delaying your risk of developing dementia," Dr Stokes said.

"These include looking after your brain health, body health and heart health.

"Throughout our life cycle, we can all take steps to reduce our risk of developing the disease – which has no cure – or at least delay its impacts until later in life. It's never too early or too late to start.

"With 421,000 people in Australia living with dementia and this figure projected to double by 2054, a focus on government-funded public health and promotion is needed."

The Lancet commission on dementia has found that addressing 14 modifiable risk factors, starting in childhood and continuing throughout life, could prevent or delay up to 45% of dementia cases.

The 14 risk factors are: high low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, vision loss, lower levels of education, hearing impairment, high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption; traumatic brain injury, air pollution and social isolation.

Dementia Australia Honorary Medical Advisory Associate Professor Michael Woodward AM said it is never too late to start reducing your risk of dementia.

"Educational and mentally stimulating activities, even in later life, reduce our risk of dementia. Wearing hearing aids, if hearing impaired, doubles the time it would take to progress from mild cognitive impairment to dementia, from an average of two to four years," Associate Professor Woodward said.

"While it is important to stress that dementia is complex and that people living with the condition have in no way brought dementia on themselves, this research shows that with significant commitment and investment by governments to raise awareness of these modifiable risk factors, we could be preventing or delaying the impact of dementia in the future," Dr Stokes said.

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated more than 421,000 Australians living with dementia, and the more than 1.6 million people involved in their care. We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible. No matter how you are impacted by dementia or who you are, we are here for you.

For support, please contact the **National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500**. An interpreter service is available. The National Dementia Helpline is funded by the Australian Government. People looking for information can also visit **dementia.org.au**

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines](#).

Note to Editors:

We request, where possible, details for the **National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500** appear alongside news stories about dementia, as these stories often prompt questions or concerns:

If this story has prompted any questions or concerns, please call the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500 (24 hours, 7 days a week) or visit dementia.org.au.