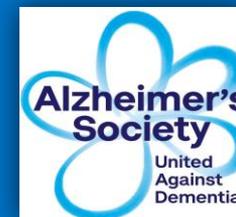


# Helping your brain to stay healthy

## 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

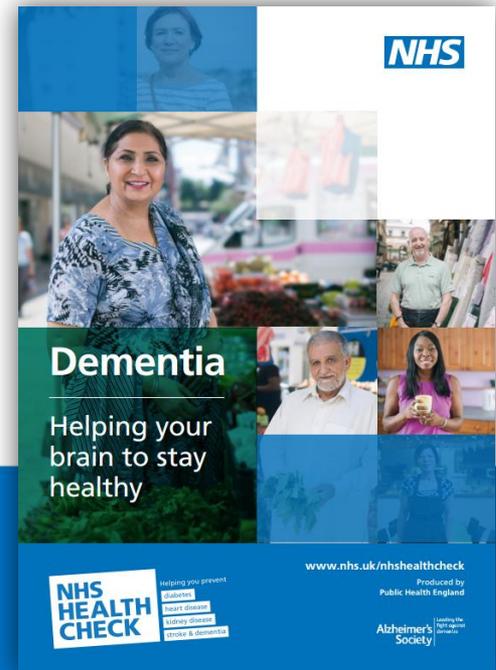
This resource is intended to be incorporated into, or to support current NHS Health Check training materials.

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.

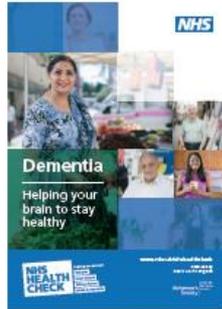
# What information do you need to also provide and promote to people aged 65+ who receive an NHS Health Check?

- 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 keep people healthy, risk could lower health chances of getting dementia - symptoms caused by various brain diseases. Many people don't know that what they do every day can help keep a healthy brain. The goal is to help you take steps to help keep a healthy brain.

**What is dementia?**  
Dementia affects the way the brain normally works. This makes it difficult to do things you used to do. For example, you may have trouble when you forget names or things.

**Myths about dementia**  
Myth 1: Dementia is hereditary. Fact: Dementia is only inherited in a very small number of cases. Most dementia is not inherited.

**Controlling your mood**  
For example, feeling sad, nervous or angry. If you have problems like this, your doctor or pharmacist may be able to help. Some symptoms, such as depression, can lead to a problem with your memory.

**Reducing your risk of dementia**  
Your memory and your ability to think and remember things depend on your brain. By looking after your brain, you can reduce your chance of getting dementia. The NHS leaflet you have now will help to keep your brain active and healthy.

**Be physically active**  
Being physically active will help reduce your risk of dementia. It will improve how well you feel. And it will help to keep your heart, lungs and muscles healthy. Aim to be active every day for 15 minutes or more. You can do this in many ways.

**Eat healthily and maintain a healthy weight**  
A healthy diet will help reduce your risk of obesity, high blood pressure and other health conditions that lead to dementia. Try to eat less fat, sugar, salt and saturated fat. And eat more fruit, vegetables and whole grains. 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 harm your brain. Drinking in big bursts over time can also be harmful to your brain.

**Stop or quit smoking**  
Smoking causes damage to your brain. It can also lead to other health conditions that lead to dementia. Stopping or quitting now can reduce your risk of dementia.

**Managing your health**  
Some people may already have a health condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes. To reduce your chance of developing dementia, it's really important to manage your health by taking the medicine you've been prescribed.

**Signposting for further information and support**  
The NHS Health Check provides a range of support and information for people who are worried about dementia. You can find out more about dementia at [www.dementia.org.uk](http://www.dementia.org.uk). You can also find out more about dementia at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). For more information, visit [www.dementia.org.uk](http://www.dementia.org.uk).



# 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