Helping your brain to stay healthy

The dementia component of the NHS Health Check

A tool for NHS Health Check trainers
‘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.
- Who is it for? All people who receive an NHS Health Check (age 40-74)
- Focus on:
  - How to reduce risk of developing dementia
  - Raising awareness 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 a normal part of ageing - it is caused by diseases of the brain
• Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of diseases including Alzheimer’s disease, vascular dementia and dementia with Lewy bodies
• Dementia is a debilitating condition with no known cure that can have devastating effects
• 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 is the dementia component important?

- A third of cases of Alzheimer’s disease may be avoidable by modifying lifestyle.
- Currently only 25% 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.
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 do not recognise dementia as a condition.
What information do you need to provide and promote?

• ‘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
What information do you need to provide and promote?

• Signs of dementia are not limited to memory loss but may include:
  – Difficulties with familiar tasks
  – Problems following conversations
  – Changes in mood and personality

• Managing blood pressure, depression and diabetes also helps to reduce the risk of dementia.

• 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 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?

- Dementia risk reduction has been part of the conversation
- The person has been given the dementia leaflet
- The link made between the risk factors for cardiovascular health and dementia
- Chance to answer any questions on dementia
- Signposted to third sector or local healthy lifestyle groups
Further links and resources

- Dementia NHS Health Check [leaflet]
- NHS Health Check website dementia [page]
- 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)
- NHS Choices
- 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