



The
**Dementia
Society**
Ottawa and Renfrew County

LIVING WELL FOR BRAIN HEALTH



The number of people living with dementia in Canada is rising. There is no single cause for dementia but there are things that increase the risk. You may be wondering:

Am I at risk?

When something increases a person's chances of developing dementia, it is called a "risk factor". There are many risk factors, but none guarantee that a person will develop dementia. Instead, these risk factors make it more likely for dementia to occur.

Some risk factors cannot be changed. These include:

- **Genetics:** There are certain types of dementia that are hereditary. This means a gene increasing the risk can be passed down from parent to child. Yet, having a specific gene does not guarantee a person will develop dementia.
- **Sex:** Women are more likely to develop dementia than men.
- **Age:** The risk of developing dementia increases as you get older.

Note: Although there is a higher risk with age, dementia is not a result of normal aging.

Some risk factors can be changed. It is never too early or too late to make lifestyle changes that reduce your risk. Actions can be taken to reduce the following risk factors:

- Hearing loss
- Head injuries
- High blood pressure
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Sleep apnea
- Air pollution
- Depression
- Social isolation

What lifestyle changes can I make to reduce my risk?

- **Take care of your heart:** Track your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and weight. See your doctor regularly to check your heart health.
- **Exercise often:** For Canada's physical activity guidelines, [Click Here](#).
- **Eat well:** Reduce processed foods in your diet. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. For more information on healthy eating, [Click Here](#).
- **Take care of your hearing:** Protect your ears from loud noises. Use hearing aids if needed.
- **Take care of your lungs:** Avoid smoking and air pollution. Visit your doctor if you have symptoms of sleep apnea.
- **Protect your head:** Consider the risks of contact sports. Wear a helmet.
- **Take care of your mental health:** Seek support for symptoms of depression.
- **Reduce alcohol intake:** For Canada's low risk drinking guidelines, [Click Here](#).
- **Stay socially active:** Connect with friends and family regularly.
- **Challenge your brain:** Seek new experiences throughout life. Find hobbies, activities, and keep learning.

Talk to your doctor about ways to make safe changes that are right for you. Tell the doctor if you have memory concerns or are experiencing changes in mood or behaviour.

Contact the Dementia Society if you have questions about brain health, dementia, or caregiving. Find resources and supports in the Ottawa area. No diagnosis required. We are your community of support: <https://dementiahelp.ca/>

Resources:

More ideas on how to be brain healthy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJBtcbjWask&list=PLqiA3A3X-xLlqa8QwqUF CxgLTTr1hLG53&index=21>

A list of activities to do at home: <https://mkodsorcwebsiteunago.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Meaningful-Activities-at-Home.pdf>

Learn more about brain health and dementia by registering for Dementia Basics: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/ottawa-programs/>

Visit our youtube page for on-demand activities and information: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI86t5wPpHzqafDpxiJP2Ag>

Ottawa: 613-523-4004 **Renfrew-County:** 1-888-411-2067 | info@dsorc.org | DementiaHelp.ca

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