

What's good for your heart, is good for your head!

Dementia cannot always be prevented, but what we can do is try and reduce our risk.

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease (like heart disease and stroke) are also risk factors for dementia. Leading a healthy lifestyle will help lower your risk of cardiovascular diseases, and it's likely you could be lowering your risk of dementia too, particularly vascular dementia.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

- **Become more active:**

Physical inactivity is one of the strongest lifestyle risk factors for developing dementia. Not only does it closely link to an increased risk of over 20 long term conditions, including heart disease and type 2 diabetes, but it also has direct effects on the structure and function of the brain.

We're not saying that you need to join a gym or run a marathon, just that you should be doing at least 150 minutes of moderate activity every week. This means doing activity that leaves you a bit out of breath and raises your heart rate e.g. walking. OneLife Suffolk runs a variety of Health Walks across Suffolk suitable for all ages and abilities. Visit www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk to find out more.

- **Stop smoking:**

Smoking tobacco has an extremely harmful effect on the heart, lungs and vascular system, including the blood vessels in the brain. Smoking significantly increases the risk of developing dementia later in life, especially Alzheimer's disease.

The good news is that OneLife Suffolk stop smoking practitioners can provide information, support and advice on how to quit – and you're up to four times more likely to be successful with their support. For more information about quitting call OneLife Suffolk on 01473 718193.



- **Eat healthily and maintain a healthy weight:**

Regularly eating foods which are high in saturated fat or sugar can cause weight gain, high cholesterol and an increased risk of dementia, cardiovascular diseases or type 2 diabetes. Foods high in salt can also contribute towards diseases like these through causing an increased blood pressure. Try to fulfil a diet which is rich in fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates and protein.

One Life Suffolk can support you to maintain a healthier diet and weight through their psychologically informed 12 week programme. For more information about programmes running in your area visit www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk

- **Take control of your health:**

Managing your health can reduce your dementia risk. If you are aged between 40-75 and due an NHS health check, OneLife Suffolk can help. At this free mid-life 'MOT', one of our practitioners will talk to you and assess your risk of cardiovascular disease.

