

## - Lifestyles

**Mind over seating: How a decade of sitting raises dementia risk**

A new study says sitting for 10 hours or more daily can increase risk of dementia. Here's how sedentary lifestyle affects your brain

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TO KEEP THE BRAIN ACTIVE AND STIMULATED, PLAY CROSSWORD AND OTHER SUCH ACTIVITIES. IT IS ALSO ADVISED TO TAKE A TWO-MINUTE BREAK EVERY 30 MINUTES OR MAYBE WORK ON A STANDING DESK.



Long hours of sitting can put you at an increased risk of dementia compared to those who sit less, says a new study published in Journal of the American Medical Association. We spoke to Dr Kunal Bahrani, director, neurology, at a hospital in Faridabad, to know more about sedentary lifestyle, which involves prolonged periods of sitting and little physical activity, and how it can have several negative effects on the brain.

#### WAYS IN WHICH A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE CAN IMPACT BRAIN HEALTH

**Cognitive decline:** Studies have shown that people who lead sedentary lives are at a higher risk of cognitive decline and conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

**Mood:** When you are sitting all the time, the flow of hormones is restricted and one ends up feeling dull. **Mental health:** A sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk of depression, anxiety and other mood disorders. Additionally, being inactive can lead to stress and lower overall mental wellbeing.

**Reduced blood flow:** When you are sedentary, blood flow to the brain can be compromised, which may lead to reduced oxygen and nutrient delivery to brain cells. This can affect cognitive function and overall brain health. **Reduced brain plasticity:** Physical activity promotes neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to adapt and reorganise itself. This is crucial for learning, memory and skill development. A sedentary lifestyle can hinder neuroplasticity and make it more difficult for the brain to adapt to new challenges.

**Obesity and metabolic disorders:** Sedentary living is often associated with weight gain and an increased risk of obesity, which can lead to various metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes. These conditions can have a negative impact on brain health.

**Sleep disturbances:** Lack of physical activity can disrupt sleep patterns. Poor sleep can impair cognitive function, memory consolidation and emotional regulation, leading to various cognitive and mood issues.

#### CHANGES YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

**Stay physically active:** Regular physical exercise is one of the most effective ways to support brain health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week, as recommended by health guidelines. **Eat a brain-healthy diet:** Consume a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish like salmon and walnuts, are particularly beneficial for brain health. Minimise processed foods, sugar and saturated fats.

**Manage stress:** Practice stress management techniques such as mindfulness meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga and progressive muscle relaxation to reduce stress levels.

**Limit alcohol and avoid substance abuse:** Consume alcohol in moderation, if at all, and avoid illicit drug use. Also, avoid smoking and tobacco use.