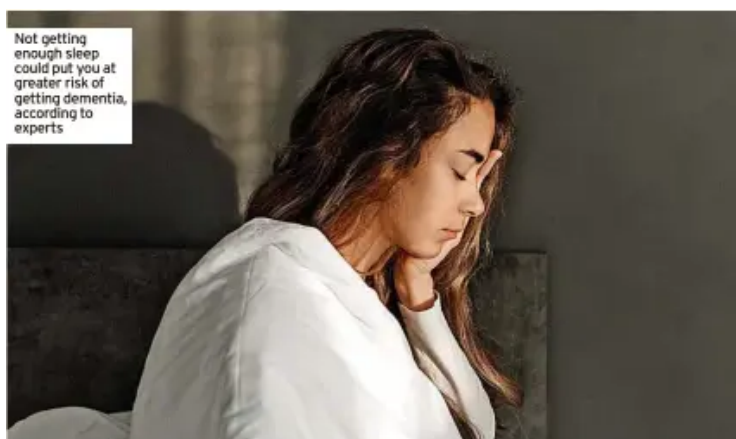


The 13 everyday habits that could put you at higher risk of dementia

RESEARCHERS SOUND ALARM ABOUT ACTIVITIES MOST WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT

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IF you're partial to a cup of coffee, enjoy binge-watching your favourite series on Netflix, or love the atmosphere at live concerts, you might want to pay attention to recent findings that suggest these activities could be putting you at a higher risk of dementia.



Researchers are sounding the alarm over everyday habits that many of us wouldn't think twice about, warning they could be causing our brains to age faster than they should, thereby increasing the likelihood of developing dementia.

Here's a rundown of 13 routines that could be doing more harm than good to your brain health:

Drinking alcohol

It's common knowledge that excessive drinking isn't good for your health, but it turns out that even moderate consumption can have significant effects on your brain. A study from 2022 found that consuming just two pints of beer or glasses of wine daily could age the brain by an entire decade, reports the Burton Mail's sister paper the Mirror.

Even more startling is the revelation that a single pint has the potential to age the brain by two years. Dr Esther Walton from the University of Bath said: "Alcohol is definitely one of the most common things that ages the brain."

Not getting enough sleep

Scientists have found that chronic sleep deprivation can increase your risk of dementia. A study published in Nature Communications revealed that those who slept for six hours or less per night had a 30% higher risk compared to those who managed seven or more. The researchers said that sleep is crucial as it helps to clear toxic proteins associated with Alzheimer's from the brain.

Spending too much time alone

A US study examined the brains of healthy adults who reported feelings of loneliness. The researchers discovered they had elevated cortical amyloid levels - a marker used in the diagnosis of dementia.

Going to concerts

Exposure to loud noises has been linked to an increased risk of hearing loss, which scientists say could heighten the likelihood of developing dementia. This can occur through various activities such as listening to music via headphones, tuning into the radio, attending live concerts, or workplace noise.

Drinking coffee

Research published in *Nutritional Neuroscience* indicates that individuals who consume more than six cups of coffee daily may have a 53 per cent increased risk of dementia diagnosis compared to those who drink one to two cups.

Missing GP appointments

Skipping routine health checks like blood pressure and cholesterol screenings is a no-no.

Not getting enough exercise

Regular exercise can slash your risk of developing dementia by 28 per cent, according to the Alzheimer's Society. Whether it's hitting the gym, clocking up steps or enjoying a morning swim, staying active is crucial.

Taking part in contact sports

Participating in contact sports could also be risky. A Danish study indicated an increased risk of dementia for a decade following a head injury in individuals over 50, with greater danger accompanying more head injuries.

Research from the University of Glasgow revealed that professional footballers face a three-and-a-half times higher risk of death from progressive brain injuries compared to the general population, with a fivefold increase in the likelihood of dying from Alzheimer's.

Junk food

The link between diet and brain conditions may be debated, but it's clear that healthy eating benefits overall well-being and offers protective effects.

Lack of education

When it comes to education and its impact on cognitive decline, which everyone experiences as they age, there are indications that higher levels of education may offer some protection against dementia. Living with a stressful job

The Alzheimer's Society has highlighted that stress, which impacts the immune system, plays a significant role in the onset of dementia.

Mindless scrolling

Excessive screen time is having a profound impact on our brains, leading to what's being termed as "digital dementia."

Smoking

Smoking is believed to increase the risk of dementia by 30 to 50 per cent. Some experts even suggest that around 14 per cent of dementia cases worldwide can be attributed to smoking.