

The Dementia Risk Checklist

Fourteen factors, three checks, one weekly number. Print it, book the appointments.

CHECKED AGAINST TIER 1 GUIDANCE

CDC · NIH NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING · WHO

1 BOOK THE THREE CHECKS THAT FIND THE HIDDEN RISKS

- ☐ **Blood pressure** - usually causes no symptoms you can feel. Ask for the number.
- ☐ **Hearing test** - if you raise the volume or lose conversations in noise.
- ☐ **Eye exam** - untreated vision loss joined the list in 2024.
- ☐ **Add to your next blood panel:** blood sugar and LDL cholesterol.

2 BANK 150 MINUTES OF MOVEMENT EVERY WEEK

- ☐ Mon _____ Tue _____ Wed _____ Thu _____ Fri _____ Sat _____ Sun _____
- ☐ **Short bouts count the same** as one long session. Walking counts. Chores count.
- ☐ About 20 minutes a day gets you there without a gym membership.

The federal target is 150 minutes a week for all adults. It is the same number for your heart, and it is free.

3 TREAT WHAT THE CHECKS FIND, HEARING FIRST

- ☐ **Hearing aids may reduce the risk** and keep you in conversation, which counts twice.
- ☐ **Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol** - managed with a clinician, not a supplement.
- ☐ **Depression** is on the fourteen. Treating it is worth doing in its own right.
- ☐ No vitamin or supplement is currently recommended for preventing cognitive decline.

4 PROTECT THE BRAIN YOU ALREADY HAVE

- ☐ **Quit smoking** and keep alcohol low. Both raise risk directly and through blood pressure.
- ☐ **Avoid head injuries** - helmets, handrails, and clearing the trip hazards at home.
- ☐ **Sleep 7 to 9 hours.** Poor sleep sits in WHO's health conditions column.
- ☐ **Stay in company.** Social isolation is a listed risk factor, not a soft one.

THE FOURTEEN, SORTED

Blood pressure	TREAT
Hearing loss	TREAT
Vision loss	TREAT
Diabetes	TREAT
LDL cholesterol	TREAT
Depression	TREAT
Smoking	STOP
Excess alcohol	STOP
Inactivity	STOP
Isolation	STOP
Head injury	AVOID
Air pollution	AVOID
Obesity	MANAGE
Low education	KEEP LEARNING

WHAT IS NOT ON THE LIST

Age. It is the strongest risk factor of all and nobody can change it. That is why the other fourteen matter.

BEYOND THE CHECKLIST · YOUR NUMBERS, YOUR WEEK, YOUR WHY

THE NUMBERS TO AIM AT - circle the two you can move first

LEVER	TARGET
Aerobic activity	150 min a week
Sleep	7 to 9 hours a night
Blood pressure	Under 120 systolic
Hearing check	Ask at your next visit
Alcohol	Moderate, or none

These are targets to work toward, not ceilings to stay under. The 120 systolic figure is the SPRINT MIND trial target for adults 50 and older; your clinician sets yours.

THE WEEKLY MOVEMENT BANK - 150 minutes, however you fill it

Brisk walk	1 session	30 min
Water aerobics	1 class	45 min
Stationary bike	1 session	20 min
Strength work	1 session	30 min
Yard work or chores	1 stretch	20 min
Dancing	1 session	30 min

Session lengths are examples, not prescriptions. Anything that leaves you breathing harder counts, and the 150 is the weekly total (NIA).

WHAT THE LIST IS PROTECTING - why the habits are worth it

✓ Blood vessels that feed the brain	✓ Blood sugar the brain runs on
✓ Hearing that keeps you in conversation	✓ Sleep that clears the day
✓ New learning and social contact	✓ Head injuries you never have

Age is the strongest risk factor and cannot be changed. Nearly 45 percent of dementia cases trace to factors that can (CDC, 2024).