

How Lifestyle Affects Alzheimers

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Worrywarts vs Social Butterflies & Juice Drinkers: How They're Different

The stress of being a worrywart may more than double your chances of developing Alzheimer's disease, according to new research which appeared in the January 25 issue of *Neurology*. The study showed that older people prone to constant worry were over twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease over the next few years

compared to nonworriers. The link between distress and Alzheimer's disease appears to be stronger in whites than in African-Americans.

Over 1,000 healthy older adults in Chicago were studied and evaluated for their tendencies to worry and feel distressed, and were re-evaluated three to six years later. During the follow up period 170 people developed Alzheimer's, and the finding made that those who were prone to distress and worry were 2.4 times more likely to develop the disease than someone who was not prone to worry. The only other previous study to look at the relationship between being prone to distress or worry and Alzheimer's disease involved a group of clergy members, and also suggested that constant worry increased the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Longer-term studies are needed to fully understand the nature of this relationship.

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled,
neither let them be afraid". John 14:27*

Another stream of studies from the June 2005 International Conference on the Prevention of Dementia (compiled in *Health Day News*, 6/20/05) suggests that simple lifestyle activities such as being socially engaged and

watching how you eat, drink and exercise may have an effect on risk of developing [Alzheimer's disease](#) and [dementia](#).

In summary, a study group of over 2,500 men followed since 1965 in the Honolulu-Asia study revealed any decline in social activity from midlife into late-life did seem to raise dementia risks, as did poor social engagement in late life.

A second study found that older Japanese-Americans who drank fruit or vegetable juices at least three times a week lowered their risk of developing Alzheimer's by 75 percent, compared with people who drank these juices less than once a week. And the researchers at the University of South Florida College of Public Health in Tampa found Vitamin E, C and beta-carotene supplements did not have a similar effect, however. "This suggests that something about the juices are different from the purified vitamin," Thies, the study author said. (Micronutrients in the whole food??)

Then a third study found that physical activity and moderate alcohol consumption might also help maintain cognitive ability later in life. Among 500 adult children of people with Alzheimer's, exercise and moderate alcohol consumption were associated with better performance on several cognitive measures, reported researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Medical School (based on data from the Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer's Prevention).

"We do have some concern about a public health recommendation that says drink more alcohol, but there's no concern about recommending more exercise," Thies said. Drink and be merry, but just drink the right things in the right amounts and then don't worry!

From the November 2005 Issue
of Friends Connecting Newsletter