

# Lifestyle advice for would-be centenarians

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For the past 50 years, researchers at Sahlgrenska Academy have followed the health of 855 Gothenburg men born in 1913. Now that the study is being wrapped up, it turns out that ten of the subjects lived to 100 and conclusions can be drawn about the secrets of their longevity.

Over the past half century, the University Gothenburg has hosted one of the world's first prospective studies of aging. The [subjects](#) are 855 Gothenburg men born in 1913.

The first surveys were conducted in 1963. Now that it has been determined that ten of the men lived to 100, the study is being wrapped up.

## Promotes longevity

Various surveys at the age of 54, 60, 65, 75, 80 and 100 permitted the [researchers](#) to consider the factors that appear to promote longevity.

A total of 27% (232) of the original group lived to the age of 80 and 13% (111) to 90. All in all, 1.1% of the subjects made it to their 100th birthday.

According to the study, 42% of deaths after the age of 80 were due to cardiovascular disease, 20% to infectious diseases, 8% to stroke, 8% to cancer, 6% to pneumonia and 16% to other causes.

A total of 23% of the over-80 group were diagnosed with some type of

dementia.

## Unique design

"The unique design has enabled us to identify the factors that influence survival after the age of 50," says Lars Wilhelmsen, who has been involved in the study for the past 50 years. "Our recommendation for people who aspire to centennarianism is to refrain from smoking, maintain healthy cholesterol levels and confine themselves to four cups of coffee a day."

## Correlation with the mother's age

It also helps if you paid a high rent for a flat or owing a house at [age](#) 50 (indicating good socio-economic standard), enjoy robust working capacity at a bicycle test when you are 54 and have a mother who lived for a long time.

"Our findings that there is a correlation with maternal but not paternal [longevity](#) are fully consistent with a previous studies," Dr. Wilhelmsen says. "Given that the same associations have been demonstrated in Hawaii, the genetic factor appears to be a strong one." But still we found that this "genetic factor" was weaker than the other factors. So factors that can be influenced are important for a long life.

## No smokers

Two of the 100-year-olds dropped out of the study due to dementia and one for personal reasons. Facts about the other seven:

- Two lived at home and five in assisted living facilities
- None of them smoked

- All of them exhibited good temporal and spatial cognition
- All of them wore hearing aids
- Most of them wore glasses, were able to read and watch TV
- All of them were slim and had good postures
- All of them used walkers

"Normally we conducted the surveys at hospitals, but we visited the seven centenarians at home," Dr. Wilhelmsen says. all of them were clinically healthy, satisfied with their circumstances and pleased to be living where they were."

**More information:** "Men born in 1913 followed to age 100 years." By Wilhelmsen L, Dellborg M, Welin L, Svärdsudd K. Published in Scandinavian Cardiovascular Journal. Link to abstract: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25658252](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25658252)

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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