

Marriage is linked to reduced dementia risk

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Researchers from University College London have found that people who are single or widowed are at a greater risk of dementia than people who are married. The research, which is a review of 15 existing studies, is being published today in the *Journal of Neurology Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*.

Dr Laura Phipps of Alzheimer's Research UK, said:

"There is compelling [research](#) showing married [people](#) generally live longer and enjoy better health, with many different factors likely to be contributing to that link. People who are married tend to be financially better off, a factor that is closely interwoven with many aspects of our health. Spouses may help to encourage healthy habits, look out for their partner's [health](#) and provide important social support.

"Research suggests that social interaction can help to build cognitive reserve – a mental resilience that allows people to function for longer with a disease like Alzheimer's before showing symptoms. While people who are unmarried or widowed may have fewer opportunities for social engagement as they age, this certainly isn't always the case. This research points to differences in levels of physical activity and education underlying much of the differences in [dementia](#) risk between single, married and widowed people. Staying physically, mentally, and socially active are all important aspects of a healthy lifestyle and these are things everyone, regardless of their marital status, can work towards. It's important to remember that this study is taking a population-level view, and age, genetic and lifestyle factors will all play a role in defining

someone's risk of dementia at an individual level."

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

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