

Could a Mediterranean diet and exercise reduce dementia risk?

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Researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) are launching a new study to see whether eating a Mediterranean-style diet and being more active could improve brain function and reduce dementia risk.

A Mediterranean- style [diet](#) is rich in fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes, wholegrain cereals, fish and [olive oil](#) with limited intake of dairy foods, red meat and confectionary. Red wine is the typical alcoholic beverage, which is consumed with meals.

The trial, which is the first study of its kind in the UK, will attempt to change the diet and exercise habits of people over a 24-week period.

They are looking for more than 60 volunteers from the region to take part, with participants also recruited in Newcastle and Birmingham.

Lead researcher Prof Anne-Marie Minihiene from the Norwich Medical School said: "There are 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK with this number set to soar to over 2 million by 2050.

"While there are some drugs to help treat the symptoms of diseases like Alzheimer's, the most common cause of dementia, there are no treatments that can stop or slow the spread of these diseases through the brain.

"That's why it's so important that we look at [preventative measures](#) such as changes to diet or other lifestyle factors, in order to retain brain vitality.

"Over the past 10 years, scientists have identified that a Mediterranean Diet and taking regular exercise improve cognition and are associated with a lower risk of dementia, including . However, more evidence is needed from [human studies](#) conducted in UK adults."

Volunteers must be between 55 and 74 years old, and have no diagnosis of [dementia](#) but may be noticing some decline in their memory.

Prof Minihiene said: "We're looking for people who are prepared to try

to make changes to their diet and physical activity levels.

"The study will involve cognitive tests, an MRI brain scan, providing a small number of blood samples, keeping a food record, wearing an activity monitor on your wrist and attending group sessions."

Anyone interested in taking part can check their eligibility by completing the following questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/medex-uk>

Provided by University of East Anglia

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