

AAIC: A healthy lifestyle may deflect dementia

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(HealthDay)—Seniors at risk for dementia may help safeguard their memory and ability to think by adopting a healthier lifestyle, a new study from Finland suggests. The study findings were presented this week at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference, held from July 12 to 17 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The study involved 1,260 people aged 60 to 77 at risk for dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Half of the participants received nutritional guidance, physical exercise, brain training, social activities, and management of heart health risk factors. The other half just received regular health advice.

The researchers found that, after two years, the group that underwent lifestyle changes performed significantly better on memory tests, problem-solving exercises, and quick-thinking quizzes. Only about 11 percent of participants dropped out after two years, which researchers took as a sign that the lifestyle changes weren't too onerous.

Keith Fargo, Ph.D., director of scientific programs and outreach for the Alzheimer's Association, told *HealthDay* that earlier studies have observed that each of these [lifestyle changes](#) might help fight dementia. But this is the first [randomized clinical trial](#) to put those findings to the test. "This is the first study to definitively show that changing your lifestyle will reduce your risk for cognitive decline," he said. The study authors plan an extended seven-year follow-up that will track the incidence of [dementia](#) and Alzheimer's, and will include brain imaging scans.

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