



### BRAIN HEALTH MONTH

## Tobacco and Mental Illness

People living with mental illness have a high rate of smoking. In America, 44.3% of all cigarettes are consumed by individuals who live with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. People with schizophrenia are three to four times as likely to smoke as the general population.

Smoking is known to cause heart disease, stroke and lung disease, among other medical problems. Second-generation atypical antipsychotic medications (SGAs) cause an increased risk of heart disease, so it's important that individuals living with mental illness quit smoking.

Every year, smoking kills about 200,000 people who live with mental illness. Also, smoking increases the breakdown of medicines in the body, so smokers often need to take higher doses to get the same results as someone who does not smoke.

If a smoker quits, they can usually get the same treatment results from lower doses of psychiatric medications.

*The National Alliance on Mental Illness* believes that people with mental illness have the right to be smoke free and they must be given the education and support to make healthy choices. Effective prevention and treatment should be part of effective mental health care treatment.

If a hospital has a smoking policy, it must take steps to help stop smoking and provide smoking cessation treatment. This treatment should continue when the person returns to the community.

Tobacco and Smoking. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Public-Policy/Tobacco-and-Smoking>

*The revelation that over a third of dementia cases worldwide are, in theory, entirely preventable is cause for celebration. But to achieve even close to this kind of reduction in cases we need to consider two important challenges - firstly how risk factors like education, obesity and depression apply not just at a population level, but to individual people who all have their own unique genetic risk profiles, and secondly how we can motivate people in mid to late life to change their behaviour and adopt healthier lifestyle choices.*

- Dr. Doug Brown, Director of Research at Alzheimer's Society



## Dementia Prevention: One-Third of Cases of Dementia May Be Preventable

A report presented by *The Lancet Commission* reveals that 35% of all dementia cases could be prevented if the following nine modifiable risk factors were fully eliminated - poor early education, hearing loss, hypertension, obesity, smoking, depression, physical inactivity, social isolation and diabetes.

**The three most common modifiable risk factors identified were poor early school education, hearing loss in mid-life and smoking.**

The report concludes that we have made great strides in understanding how to support people to manage their dementia. With access to the right interventions, we have the potential to transform the lives of people with dementia and their families by maximizing cognition, decreasing distressing associated symptoms, reducing crises, and improving quality of life.

As the number of people with dementia rises, the global cost of dementia will continue to increase. Nearly 85% of costs are related to family and social care, rather than medical expenses, highlighting the urgent need to improve care across the globe.

AAIC: Lancet Commission reveals a third of cases of dementia may be preventable - Alzheimer's Society comment: Retrieved from <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2018-05-03/aaic-lancet-commission-reveals-third-cases-dementia-may-be-preventable-alzheimers>



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See calendar on other side to see what is going on this week

## A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

*A friend recently told me that I should stop smoking because it causes dementia. Is that a fact or a scare tactic?*

Sincerely,  
Never Heard That One Before

Dear Never Heard That One Before,

Your friend is partly correct. Just because you smoke, does not mean that you will definitely get dementia. However, several studies have shown an association between tobacco and dementia. A 2017 article published in the medical journal *The Lancet* identified smoking as a modifiable risk factor for dementia. Most people have heard about the physical health risks of tobacco, but it is important to know that there are also some mental health risks.

According to the Veterans Administration, here are some of the benefits and effects of quitting smoking:

- Reduce stress and improve your mental health
- Help you save money
- Boost the effectiveness of some anxiety and depression medications
- Make it easier to stop using drugs and alcohol
- Increase your energy
- Reduce your risk for cancer
- Lower your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Improve your lung function, skin, and night vision
- Strengthen your immune system, muscles, and bones
- Limit the exposure of loved ones and pets to secondhand smoke
- Help you manage HIV and other chronic health conditions

If these benefits make sense to you, talk to your healthcare provider about resources to help you quit tobacco, including cessation classes and groups, nicotine replacement therapy, and tobacco cessation medications. Together you can determine what the best approach is for you.

Sincerely,  
Health Myth Busters

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you “Bust The Myths!” Send your questions to [usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil). Make sure to include in the subject line “Health Myth Buster.” For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>

### Community Events

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU LIVE

Your Local Health Promotion Office



Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday