



Apple juice, coffee and...?

Conjugality may be the key to hanging on to your memories

OF all the questions we can ask about Alzheimer's Disease, the one everyone wants answered is: How do I prevent it?

It is one of the most studied conditions (more than 400 pharmaceutical treatments were undergoing clinical trials worldwide at the end of 2008).

The latest science has come up with some new pieces to the puzzle that is Alzheimer's, a specific form of dementia.

Apple juice is the latest potential preventative to hit the headlines – two glasses a day, precisely, according to the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.

Dr Thomas Shea and his team at Massachusetts University have demonstrated that mice receiving the equivalent of two glasses (for a human) of apple juice a day for one month produced less of the protein responsible for forming senile plaques commonly found in brains of Alzheimer's patients (post mortem).

"These findings suggest that regular consumption of apple juice can not only help to keep one's mind functioning at its best, but may also be able to delay key aspects of Alzheimer's Disease and augment therapeutic approaches," Dr Shea said.

Meanwhile an English study has found that as levels of Vitamin D go down, levels of cognitive impairment go up. Cognitive impairment, or below-normal brain function for your age, is regarded as an indicator of likelihood to develop dementia.

Vitamin D is important for bone health and for the immune system. We get it from three main sources – sunlight, natural food sources such as oily fish, and foods that are fortified with vitamin D (such as milk, cereals and soya drinks).

The capacity of the skin to absorb Vitamin D from sunlight decreases as the body ages.

Another new study shows that socially active people who are not easily stressed may be less likely to develop dementia.

"Our findings suggest that having a calm and outgoing personality in combination with a socially active lifestyle may decrease the risk of developing dementia even further," said Hui-Xin Wang of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

Another Swedish researcher has good news for those who are married or otherwise paired: living with a spouse or a partner decreases the risk of developing

Alzheimer's and other dementia diseases.

The results show that people living with a spouse or a partner in mid-life have a 50 per cent lower risk of developing dementia than people living alone, irrespective of other risk factors, such as age.

Those who have lived alone their entire adult life run twice the risk, while those who are divorced in mid-life and remain single run three times the risk.

Widows and widowers run an even greater risk.

Those at greatest risk of developing dementia diseases are people who lost their partner before middle age and then continued to live alone.

The study showed the chance of developing Alzheimer's for these individuals was six times greater than for married couples.

A Finnish study has found that moderate mid-life coffee drinking (three to five cups a day) can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's by 65 per cent.

It has also been discovered that people diagnosed with diabetes before age 65 have a 125 per cent greater risk of developing Alzheimer's.



INDISCRIMINATE DISEASE – Actor Charlton Heston with President Ronald Reagan at the White House: both men would later succumb to Alzheimer's Disease.



The Senior
April, 2009
Page: 40
Regional Changes Vic
Region: National
Circulation: 122037
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 366.81 sq.cms
Monthly



DEMENTIA is a broad term used to describe a loss of memory, intellect, rationality, social skills and what would generally be considered normal emotional reactions.

There are at least seven main types of dementia:

- AIDS-related dementia.
- Alcohol-related dementia.
- Alzheimer's Disease, the most common form (more than

50 per cent) of dementia, followed by vascular dementia.

- Dementia with Lewy bodies.
- Alzheimer's Disease in people with Down Syndrome.
- Fronto-Temporal Lobar Degeneration.
- Vascular dementia.

- Alzheimer's Australia helpline 1800-100-500, www.alzheimers.org.au