



Smoking, second-hand smoke and dementia risk

“ An international study concluded that the most promising strategies for prevention were the elimination of physical inactivity (12.7% prevented), smoking (13.9% prevented), and low education (19.1% prevented). ”

Dementia

- > dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing
- > approximately 3,000 people in Scotland have early onset (under age 65) dementia
- > dementia is an incurable and terminal condition
- > almost one third of people in the UK who died over the age of 65 years had some form of dementia

Smoking as a risk factor for dementia

- > smokers are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia
- > smoking increases the likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke which are in turn underlying risk factors for dementia
- > smoking may hasten both the onset and the severity of Alzheimer's disease
- > the risk of developing dementia may be up to 70% higher in current heavy smokers than in non-smokers
- > age-related cognitive decline may also be accelerated by smoking

Second-hand smoke as a risk factor for dementia

- > emerging evidence suggests that exposure to second-hand smoke could be a risk factor for dementia
- > exposure to second-hand smoke may be associated with increased odds of cognitive impairment
- > established evidence shows that exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes all of which are underlying risk factors for dementia

Supporting people with dementia who are smokers

- > it is important to take the views of a person with dementia into consideration and if they want to continue to smoke, to support them to do so in safety
- > in 2011 – 2012 45% of fatal house fires in Scotland were caused by matches and smokers' materials
- > simply stopping the supply of cigarettes could result in serious withdrawal symptoms, unless treated, and perhaps interfere with medication
- > when attempting to give up smoking it is best to get professional advice and support to do so, as this increases the chance of success
- > not smoking is an important part of staying well with dementia for as long as possible
- > for information and support contact the 24hr freephone Dementia Helpline 0808 808 3000.