FITNESS & BEAUTY

Attention All Fast Walkers: Your Walking Speed Could Indicate Dementia

By bestfolkmedicine · 18/03/2024 · 3 min read



A slower walk as you age has always indicated a higher risk of frailty that could increase the risk of falls and disabilities, according to experts.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(122); });

And, a new research done in small groups with elderly participants claims that a slower gait from year to year may be an early symptom of cognitive decline.

The researchers emphasize that the link between a slower walking gait and dementia may have to do with the shrinkage in the right hippocampus, a part of the brain linked to memory.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(130); });

However, not all symptoms of cognitive decline predict later dementia-only 10% to 20% of people age 65 or over with mild cognitive impairment or MCI develop dementia in the next year, as noted by the National Institute of Aging.

They add that in a lot of cases, the MCI's symptoms may remain the same or even improve.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(131); });

New Study Found a Link Between Slow Walkers & Higher Risk of Dementia

In a new study done with almost 17,000 adults over the age of 65, people who walk around 5 percent slower or more every year while also showing signs of slower mental processing, have a higher likelihood of developing dementia.

The study was published in the JAMA Network Open journal. The findings emphasize the gait importance in the assessment of dementia risk, as explained by Taya Collyer, a research fellow at the Peninsula Clinical School at Monash University in Victoria, Australia.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(132); });

In the study, a group of Americans over 65 and Australians over 70 were followed for seven years. Every other year, the participants were asked to take cognitive tests that the scientists used to measure their overall cognitive decline, verbal fluency, and processing speed.

Twice each year, the participants were also asked to walk 10 feet or 3 meters. The two results were then averaged to determine their usual gait.

When the study ended, the highest risk of dementia was in the dual decliners or the individuals who didn't only walk more sluggishly, but also had cognitive decline, according to Dr. Joe Verghese, a professor of Geriatrics and Neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(133); });

He wasn't involved in the study.

The dual decliners had a higher chance of dementia than the people with either a cognitive decline or a gait decline, as noted in Verghese's accompanying editorial published in the JAMA journal.

A 2020 meta-analysis of almost 9,000 adults found a dual link between memory decline and walking speed to be predictive of later dementia.

However, Verghese noted that despite these findings, gait dysfunction hasn't been considered an early clinical feature in people with Alzheimer's.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(134); });

Regular Exercise Can Be Helpful

There are several things we can practice as we age to reduce the brain shrinkage associated with aging. Studies have found that aerobic exercise increases the hippocampus's size and thus, betters some memory aspects.

The hippocampus is located deep in the temporal lobe of the brain. This unusually shaped organ is responsible for learning, spatial navigation, and consolidating memory.

In a 2011 randomized clinical trial, aerobic exercise helped increase the volume of the right anterior hippocampus by 2 percent and thus, reversed the age-associated loss in the organ by one to two years.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(135); });
The people in the other group who only stretched had an estimated decline of around 1.43 percent over the same time frame.

Aerobic exercise is a type of workout during which the heart rate and breathing elevate, but not excessively so that one can keep functioning.

Some of the most popular types of aerobic exercise include walking, running, swimming, dancing, biking, and kickboxing, as well as cardio machines at gyms like rowers, stair climbers, treadmills, and elliptical trainers.

ezstandalone.cmd.push(function () { ezstandalone.showAds(136); });

Sources:

CNN

VERY WELL HEALTH

Read online: https://bestfolkmedicine.com/2024/03/attention-fast-walkers-walking-speed-indicate-dementia/

Downloaded on 22/11/2026

DISCLAIMER: We do not provide medical advice and nothing contained herein shall be construed as medical advice. The contents such as text, comments, graphics, images, videos and other content contained on this site are for informational purposes only. Statements on this website have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration, and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Always consult your personal physician before starting any fitness or exercise program or changing dietary habits. The content of this site is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is not a substitute for a medical exam, nor does it replace the need for services or counsel provided by medical professionals.