



# The Primrose Press

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*Spring has Sprung!*

*The Earth Laughs in Flowers*

## The Connection Between Diabetes and Dementia

Those with type 2 diabetes have an increased risk of developing chronic cardiovascular conditions, but could it also be affecting your brain?

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the country, and puts you at risk for other serious conditions like heart disease and stroke. Recent studies have found that diabetes may also increase the risk of diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia. The Journal of the American Medical Association said the link between diabetes and dementia is hypoglycemia—low blood sugar.

Our brains use glucose for energy. When blood glucose levels are too low, like in someone with diabetes, it can cause neuronal damage and possibly lead to issues like mild cognitive impairment, dementia and Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's is characterized by certain proteins that form in the brain, known as plaques and tangles. A study from Albany University found that the extra insulin produced by those with type 2 diabetes

eventually disrupts brain chemistry and forms the same proteins found on brain cells of those with Alzheimer's.

"People who develop diabetes have to realize this is about more than controlling their weight or diet. It's also the first step on the road to cognitive decline," said Edward McNay of Albany University. "At first, they won't be able to keep up with their kids playing games, but in 30 years' time they may not even recognize them."

The presence of each condition is also likely to make the other worse. In a vicious cycle, cognitive impairment caused by hypoglycemic events may increase the risk of future events, which in turn can contribute to further cognitive decline. Researchers found that those who had a severe hypoglycemic event resulting in hospitalization were twice as likely to develop dementia within the next 12 years. Professor Melissa Schilling, a strategy and innovation expert at the NYU Stern School of Business, found that hyperinsulinemia, common in those with early diabetes,

pre-diabetes, and obesity, was also linked to Alzheimer's.

What can we do to break the cycle? Schilling, whose studies show that hyperinsulinemia is present in nearly half of those with Alzheimer's, said that researchers and specialists can start by raising awareness of the possibly linked conditions.

"If we can raise awareness and get more people tested for hyperinsulinemia, especially those who have been diagnosed with or who are at risk for dementia, it could significantly lessen the incidence of Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, as well as other diabetes-related health problems," Schilling said.

While more research is needed to prove diabetes as a cause for Alzheimer's and dementia, controlling diabetes may play a role in fighting the formation of toxic plaques in the brain.

(Written by Taylor French)

April will usher in many fun activities for our residents.



Paper Mache globes will be made and Earth shaped sugar cookies will be baked and savored!



We will be entertained by a Zoom Ukulele Concert.



Easter Sunday will be filled with themed games, movies and for those who choose, a time for spiritual reflection.