

Sleepy after meals? Could mean raised Alzheimer's risk

Do you feel sleepy or have intense cravings for sugar after meals? Are you a woman whose hair is thinning, yet you're growing facial hair? Are you a man who cries at movies and has "moobs" (male breasts)? If so, you probably suffer from insulin resistance. Not only does insulin resistance gender bend your hormones, [research](#) shows it also raises your risk for dementia and Alzheimer's.

What is insulin resistance?

A high-carb, high-sugar diet consistently raises blood sugar levels, which in turn requires the body to secrete high levels of insulin to lower blood sugar. Eventually these insulin surges exhaust the body's cells, which then refuse entry to the insulin, causing insulin resistance. Insulin resistance brought on by high blood sugar arises from eating a diet that is high in sweets, soda, and starchy foods such as breads, pasta, rice, corn, potatoes, etc.; a habit of overeating; and living a sedentary lifestyle.

The link between insulin resistance and Alzheimer's

Insulin resistance has long been linked with many common health conditions, including obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and hormonal imbalances. More recently, researchers have discovered that it also increases the risk of dementia and [Alzheimer's](#). In fact, the link is so well established that some researchers refer to Alzheimer's as "[type 3 diabetes](#)." This is because a high-carbohydrate diet has the ability to accelerate brain degeneration and cause dementia.

Insulin necessary for brain function

Insulin does more than regulate blood sugar in the body. Appropriate levels of insulin in the brain manage glucose levels for sustained mental energy. In turn, this regulates inflammation and helps produce brain chemicals that regulate mood.

The insulin surges and insulin resistance that result from a sugary, high-carbohydrate diet raises inflammation in the

brain and disrupts the [brain's ability](#) to perform even simple operations.

For many people, insulin resistance eventually becomes type 2 diabetes—the body's ability to regulate blood sugar has broken down. Moreover, [studies](#) have demonstrated a clear link between diabetes and an increased risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Don't wait until it's too late

Both insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes often can be reversed by changing your diet and lifestyle. So, it's best not to wait until you have developed dementia or Alzheimer's to take action. While a low-carb, ketogenic diet has been shown to be beneficial to those with dementia and Alzheimer's, it is also key to prevention.

Reversing insulin resistance to prevent Alzheimer's

Some of the most powerful tools to prevent dementia and Alzheimer's are, unsurprisingly, the same tools that can reverse insulin resistance. These include:

- Ditching all sweets, sugars, desserts, and sodas. Beware natural sweeteners, such as honey, maple syrup, and agave, as they still raise blood sugar and insulin. Also, avoid over-indulging in sugary fruits.
- Adopt a lower-carb diet. Some people will need a low amount of carbohydrates—coming primarily from leafy green vegetables—a day for optimal function, some will need more. Ask our office for guidelines to get started.
- Exercise regularly. Studies show a combination of both aerobic and weight lifting exercises offers the best brain protection. High-intensity interval training and weight lifting have been shown especially effective to reverse insulin resistance (but do not derail your progress by overtraining). Even just a half-hour walk daily can be extremely beneficial.
- Eat healthy, natural fats instead of processed vegetable oils. Coconut oil has been shown to be especially beneficial for brain health.

