



HEALTH NOTES



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Adventist Medical
Evangelism Network

AMEN's mission is to motivate, train, and equip Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world, hastening His return.

To learn more about AMEN and get involved go to: amensda.org.

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Avoiding Dementia

Dementia is literally losing your mind. People with dementia have problems thinking, memory is poor—especially for recent events, and people with dementia lose the ability to reason from cause to effect. Dementia occurs when the parts of the brain used for learning, memory, decision making, and language are damaged or diseased.

Between 60% to 80% of people with dementia have Alzheimer's disease which is caused by very characteristic plaques and tangles of neurons in the brain. There are several other kinds of dementia. Strokes caused by interruption of the brain's blood supply is another cause of dementia.

Brain injuries caused by car accidents, falls, or concussions from repeated sports injuries can cause dementia. Some infections of the brain such as meningitis and HIV often result in dementia. The use of various illegal drugs, and long-time alcohol use can cause permanent brain damage and dementia as well.

Although genetics can play a role in the development of dementia it is known that people with more education are much less likely to develop dementia. A recently published study shows that maintaining cardiovascular fitness in mid-life can greatly reduce the risk of developing dementia when you get older.¹

This study followed 1,462 women 38-60 years of age for a period of **44 years** starting back in 1968. These women were examined periodically throughout the study. They received testing for dementia and their level of cardiovascular fitness.

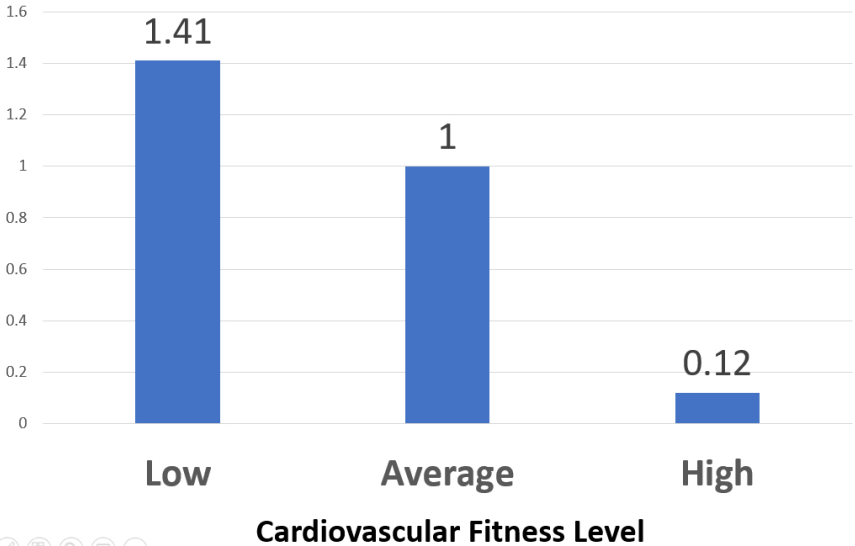
The results were dramatic as seen in the graph on the next page.

Those who maintained a low level of fitness had a 41% increase in dementia compared with those of average fitness. Those with a consistently high level of cardiovascular fitness had only 12% of the dementia of those with average fitness. That is an 88% reduction in the risk of developing dementia—just by keeping up cardio-protective exercise throughout adult life.

The Bible recognizes that exercise is useful for the body in this life but Godliness helps us here **AND** in eternity. "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." *1 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)*



Risk of Dementia by Cardiovascular Fitness



Cardiovascular Fitness Level

Mrs. White understood this relationship between exercise and the mind as well. She commented on the plight of a sick woman, "Physical exercise is very essential. This will strengthen her body **and mind.**" *Vol 2 Testimonies for the Church, p 428*

¹H. Horder, et.al., "Midlife cardiovascular fitness and dementia: A 44-year longitudinal population study in women." *Neurology*, published online March 14, 2018.

The graph was created by the author based on data found in reference 1.