

## **Cholesterol Helps Prevent Alzheimer's**

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Cholesterol is not the evil many people perceive it to be. In fact, research confirms its role in countless body functions, including infection prevention, memory, hormone balance, and mood. Recently reported in the *Annals of Neurology* increasing HDL cholesterol levels may also help delay the onset of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). This debilitating disease continues to be on the rise with numbers more than doubling since 1980.

Cholesterol makes up a large percentage of the brain. No wonder low levels are associated with a higher risk of dementia. With the cholesterol-lowering frenzy and the popular statin drugs, the side effects are sometimes overlooked, which include memory loss. In the AD study, researchers analyzed the lipid profiles of 85 volunteers aged 75 to 85 years who had varying mental states. It was found that individuals with the lowest HDL levels had double the risk of developing AD than those with the highest levels. HDL not only feeds the brain structural material, but it also provides anti-inflammatory and antioxidative properties, which all play a role in staving off AD.

Many of the lifestyle habits that raise HDL cholesterol are commonly recommended for overall health. Eating fish and reducing sugar consumption boost HDL levels. Exercise, even walking, increases HDL, while gaining weight and smoking have the opposite effect. Low fat diets actually decrease HDL cholesterol, so eating a balance of foods is critical.

AD prevention is in the palm of your hand. Live a life that involves healthy choices, and consider nutritional supplements that can further improve mental clarity and function.