

# Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

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*Thoughts from  
Dr. Amy*

## A Proven Plan to Prevent Heart Attacks, Strokes and Dementia

**W**orried that a heart attack, stroke or dementia could loom in your future? The BaleDoneen Method's new AHA (Arterial Health Assurance) for Life program can help you avoid these devastating conditions, even if you are at significant risk for developing them due to your family history or other factors. Drawing on the latest peer-reviewed science and the pioneering new medical specialty of "arteriology," the program offers a proven method to protect your heart and brain health while also optimizing the wellness of all of the more than 60,000 miles of blood vessels that nourish every organ, muscle and tissue in your body.

AHAforLife is designed to protect, enhance and even save your life with a unique, precision-medicine approach to prevention that has been shown in two recent peer-reviewed studies to rapidly shrink and stabilize arterial plaque, helping patients avoid heart attacks and strokes, even if they have already suffered one or more of these events. The program includes a free, personalized risk assessment for arterial disease. It also provides a wealth of online tools and resources to support you step-by-step through our life-changing disease reversal and prevention method, practiced by thousands of healthcare providers around the world.

### **Saving Lives, Brains and Hearts with Precision Medicine**

Every 43 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a heart attack. Every 65 seconds, an American develops dementia. And every four minutes, an American man or woman dies from a stroke. As discussed more fully on our new website [www.AHAforLife.com](http://www.AHAforLife.com), the wonderful news is that with the optimal care and the right lifestyle moves, arterial disease and its devastating complications (such as vascular dementia) are potentially preventable.

It takes more than the current standard of care to achieve these outcomes. BaleDoneen providers have been called

"disease detectives" because they use advanced lab and imaging tests to provide a comprehensive, personalized assessment to directly check each patient for hidden signs of arterial disease or "red flags" that signal increased risk for developing it. Our evidence-based method also uses leading-edge therapies and interventions to ensure that you will not become one of the grim statistics.

### **Discover Your Arterial Disease Risk**

On the AHAforLife website, you can access a [free assessment](#) to help you and your healthcare provider identify your

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507 S. Washington, Suite 170  
Spokane, Washington 99204

[BaleDoneen.com](http://BaleDoneen.com)





# IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PREVENTABLE?

Every 65 seconds, an American develops Alzheimer's disease (AD), the most common form of dementia. This memory-robbing disorder affects one in ten U.S. adults ages 65 and up, and one in three of those over 85. Globally, AD and other forms of dementia affect 47 million people — and this figure is expected to triple by 2050. The good news, however, is that dementia may be preventable, according to new risk reduction guidelines from World Health Organization (WHO).

The guidelines add to a landmark 2018 study identifying nine potentially reversible lifestyle risks. The report, published in *Lancet*, suggests that by eliminating these risks, up to 35% of dementia cases may be preventable. Here are the best ways to keep your brain and memory sharp while also enhancing your heart and arterial health.

## **A Three-Step Prevention Plan to Protect Your Brain**

The authors of the *Lancet* report identify three potential strategies for dementia prevention: 1) reducing brain damage; 2) reducing brain inflammation; and 3) increasing the brain's "cognitive reserve." Drawing on the report, the WHO guidelines, and other recent peer-reviewed research, the BaleDoneen Method recommends the following steps, all of which will help you achieve these goals:

### **Step One: Optimize Your Cardiovascular Wellness**

Healthy blood vessels are essential to your brain's well-being. Although your brain only accounts for about 2% of your body weight, it is powered by 25% of your blood flow, which supplies it with about 20% of the oxygen you breathe. Your brain contains about 100 billion neurons (also called nerve cells), about half the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy. Each neuron has 100 to 1,000 connections with other neurons, collectively comprising the wiring the brain

uses to send signals to the rest of body.

Neurons also play a role in memory. In fact, [an intriguing study](#) found that the brain contains specific neurons that light up when we hear the names of celebrities (including Oprah and Whoopi Goldberg), movie characters (such as Luke Skywalker) or famous places (such as the Eiffel Tower). Each neuron has its own blood supply: capillaries smaller than human hairs, with walls that are only one endothelial cell thick. These micro-vessels ferry blood between the body's smallest arteries and veins, nourishing your neurons and cleansing them of wastes.

So important is blood-vessel health to brain function that most of the new recommendations for AD and dementia prevention of AD echo those for cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention. Patients are advised to take the following actions to avoid vascular and oxidative stress and associated brain injuries:

- **Avoid nicotine use and exposure to secondhand smoke.** Nicotine exposure damages the cardiovascular system and reduces oxygen flow to the brain. Magnifying the danger to your most important organ: Cigarette smoke and nicotine contain neurotoxins that increase oxidative stress, inflammation and risk for strokes and smaller bleeds in the brain, all of which are risk factors for dementia. Kicking the habit — and avoiding secondhand smoke — have been shown to lower risk dramatically, while continu-

ing to use nicotine in any form has been shown raise the threat of memory loss by up to 220%!

- **Get high blood pressure under control.** One in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure, a condition that is more dangerous to arterial health than smoking or obesity. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke, which in turn can lead to vascular dementia. Large studies have shown that high blood pressure in midlife can double risk for Alzheimer's in old age — and the higher your blood pressure is, the greater the threat. As we recently reported, [five healthy lifestyle steps can reduce stroke risk by 90%](#).

- **Keep your blood sugar in check.** Abnormal blood sugar levels are the root cause of about 70% of heart attacks and such a powerful risk factor for memory loss that some experts call Alzheimer's disease "type 3 diabetes." One explanation is that having type 2 diabetes or prediabetes may reduce flow of blood and essential nutrients to the brain by damaging blood vessels. [As we recently reported](#), one in three adults have prediabetes and 90% of them are undiagnosed, magnifying their risk for heart attack, stroke and dementia. Talk to your medical provider about getting the most accurate screening test for blood sugar abnormalities: the two-hour oral glucose tolerance test.

- **Get checked for all forms of**

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## October Recipe

Ready in just 20 minutes, this easy baked salmon recipe is rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. A diet high in oily fish has been shown to reduce blood pressure, triglycerides and inflammation while raising levels of HDL “good” cholesterol. Serve with your favorite salad, steamed vegetables, guacamole or salsa for a feast of flavors that is low in calories and salt.

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 fresh or frozen salmon fillets, about 5 ounces each
- 2 lemons, zested and juiced
- 1 tablespoon Cajun or Creole seasoning
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup minced Italian parsley (for garnish)



Cajun Salmon Filets with Lemon Zest

### PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a large baking dish with foil and spray with non-stick cooking spray. In a large bowl, marinate the salmon in the lemon juice for five minutes. Meanwhile, combine all of the spices. Remove salmon from lemon juice and sprinkle evenly with spice mixture, then drizzle with oil. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes or until cooked through. Garnish with lemon zest and parsley, then enjoy!

Adapted from [TheSaltyMarshmallow.com](http://TheSaltyMarshmallow.com) and [CreoleContessa.com](http://CreoleContessa.com).

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key areas for arterial disease risk. Complete the assessment and we will send your personalized report right to your inbox!

We are also offering exclusive, free, instant access to the entire first module of the AHAforLife program: a series of powerful videos with potentially lifesaving information you’ve probably never heard before.

#### **A powerful promise:**

How more than two decades of landmark research by the creators of the AHAforLife program, Drs. Bradley Bale and Amy Doneen, can help you live well, without fear of heart attack, stroke or other catastrophic complications of arterial disease.

- **How the cardiovascular “standard of care” is failing you — and the entire U.S.**
- **Your red flags — and what they mean for your health.**
- **How most physicians are looking at the wrong markers to check for hidden disease risk.**
- **How heart attacks and strokes really happen.**

- **Why 50% of heart attacks and strokes happen to people with completely NORMAL cholesterol.**
- **How healthy gums help prevent heart attacks, strokes and even Alzheimer’s disease.**

And that’s just the beginning of this program, which has been hailed by healthcare providers as “an incredible resource,” “the future of medicine” and “the only totally comprehensive program in the world for the prevention of this disease.” While arterial disease, heart attack and stroke continue to claim more lives each year than all forms of cancer combined, your story can be different — even if you are at significant risk.

Visit the [AHAforlife.com](http://AHAforlife.com) website today — and take the first step toward a brighter, more vibrant and healthier future! Become an active partner with your healthcare provider in protecting and optimizing your arterial wellness. And please share what you learn with your loved ones, to help us save and enhance lives.



Follow the HASPC on **Twitter** and **Facebook** for the latest news on heart health and wellness.



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**dangerous cholesterol.** About one in three Americans have elevated levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol, a major risk for developing atherosclerosis (plaque in the arteries). There are [new guidelines for the management of this condition and new treatment options](#). Also talk to your healthcare provider about being tested for [elevated levels of lipoprotein \(a\), or Lp\(a\), an inherited cholesterol disorder that triples risk for heart attacks](#). Also have your levels of apolipoprotein B-100 (ApoB) checked; widespread use of this \$20 blood test, which is available through almost all medical labs, [could prevent 500,000 heart attacks and strokes](#), according to a study published in *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

**Step Two: Take Action to Avoid Fire in Your Arteries and Your Brain**

You've probably seen recent headlines about a "revolutionary new approach" to heart attack and stroke prevention: targeting chronic inflammation. Actually, the BaleDoneen Method has been doing exactly that for nearly 20 years. As discussed more fully in the BaleDoneen book, *Beat the Heart Attack Gene*, our method uses a "fire panel" of inexpensive, widely available lab tests to check for this fiery process.

Inflammation, which we call "fire," actually causes arterial disease — and is more dangerous to your arteries than having high cholesterol! Heart attacks and strokes are triggered when a diseased artery becomes so inflamed that it can no longer contain the plaque smoldering inside. Like a volcano spewing molten lava, inflammation causes a breach in the artery wall, leading to the formation of a clot that blocks blood flow.

Inflammation and oxidative stress are also linked to buildup of beta-amyloid. Many scientists believe that accumulation of this sticky compound in the brain is the primary cause of AD. According to "[the amyloid hypothesis](#)," the development of the amyloid plaques that are the hallmark of AD activates immune cells, leading to inflammation that eventually destroys brain cells. Proven prevention strategies to prevent inflammation include these: eventually:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Nearly 40% of Americans are obese. Defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher, obesity raises risk for dementia by up to



92%, the *Lancet* study reported. Excess weight also greatly magnifies risk for chronic inflammation, CVD, type 2 diabetes, cancer and joint disorders. However, the wonderful news is that even modest weight loss can significantly improve your arterial and overall wellness. Try our [seven science-backed strategies to get rid of unwanted pounds and boost brain health](#).

- **Ask your dental provider to check** In a 2016 study, people with severe gum disease were 70% more likely to develop AD. A landmark, [peer-reviewed BaleDoneen study](#), published in *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, was the first to identify high-risk oral bacteria from PD — and the systemic inflammation they cause — as a contributing cause of arterial disease, while other studies have shown that taking excellent care of your teeth and gums can add years to your life. Follow [our easy, four-step plan](#) to optimize your oral-systemic health.
- **Get depression treated.** The *Lancet* researchers state that it's "biologically plausible" that depression could be a dementia risk because it "affects stress hormones, neuronal growth factors, and hippocampus (brain) volume." Recent [studies](#) show that inflammation plays a major role in depression and also influences patients' response to antidepressant medications.
- **Move more.** Regular exercise trims your waistline and keeps your wits sharp. Columbia [researchers reported](#) that older adults who exercised vigorously 1.3 hours a week were 33% less likely to develop Alzheimer's. Those who combined physical activity, such as jogging, hiking, or biking, with a Mediterranean diet got even greater benefit, whittling their AD risk by 60%. In a recent analysis of studies of nearly 200,000 people, those who exercised the most had a 38% lower risk for cognitive decline.
- **Eat anti-inflammatory foods.** A diet high in fruit and vegetables, with moderate amounts of omega-3 rich fish (such

as salmon, tuna or herring), and low in red meat and sweets, helps lower risk for dementia, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and other diseases. For the best cardiovascular protection, we recommend [a diet based on your DNA](#).

**Step Three: Stay mentally and socially engaged.**

Like your body, your mind needs exercise to stay fit. The [Lancet paper](#) and other research show that highly educated people are less likely to suffer memory loss, possibly because keeping the brain active boosts its "cognitive reserve," allowing it to work efficiently even if some of its neurons are damaged. A wide range of activities provide healthy mental stimulation, including these:

- **Rev up your brain.** A study of older adults found that those who spent the most time listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, going to museums and doing puzzles had a 47% lower rate of AD. Other brain-boosters include learning a foreign language, taking courses and playing games, such as bridge or Scrabble.
- **Consider brain training.** The [WHO guidelines](#) advise healthcare providers to offer cognitive training (also known as brain training) to older adults to reduce their risk for cognitive decline and/or dementia. Although brain training, including software products, has exploded into a \$1.3 billion industry in the U.S., these programs vary widely in quality — and [many have no peer-reviewed evidence of their efficacy](#). Ask your healthcare provider if brain training is right for you and which program(s) he or she recommends.
- **Keep in touch with friends.** Get-togethers with friends, neighbors or family can have a surprising payoff, Harvard researchers report. In their study of people in their 50s and 60s, those who were the most socially connected had half the rate of memory loss during the six-year study as those who were socially isolated.
- **Have your hearing checked.** A surprising new discovery: Even mild hearing loss raises dementia risk, while more severe hearing loss doubles or triples the threat. Hearing may be important to protecting memory because of what the *Lancet* paper's lead author, Gill Livingston, calls "the use it or lose it" model. "We get a lot of intellectual stimulation through hearing," [she told Vox](#).