

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 7A.M EDT

CONTACT: Alzheimer's Association Media Line, 312.335.4078, media@alz.org
AAIC 2025 Press Office, aaicmedia@alz.org

RESEARCH ADVANCES FROM THE 2025 ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

TORONTO, July 31, 2025 — New research results reported at the [Alzheimer's Association International Conference® 2025 \(AAIC®\)](#) advanced scientific understanding of risk, diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Highlights include:

- Two lifestyle interventions in the U.S. POINTER clinical trial improved cognition in older adults at risk of cognitive decline. A structured intervention with more support and accountability showed greater improvement compared to a self-guided intervention, helping to protect against normal age-related decline for up to two years.
- The Alzheimer's Association released its first clinical practice guidelines on use of blood biomarker tests by specialists to assist in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.
- Taking a combination of common drugs to treat blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes may slow cognitive decline, according to data from five studies.
- Lead in the atmosphere and environment may be linked to memory problems 50 years later, based on a study of more than 600,000 people.
- Walking and other lifestyle interventions could benefit people with the strongest known genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease, the APOE4 gene variant.
- The first results from "real world" studies of new amyloid targeting Alzheimer's drugs confirmed findings from the late-stage clinical trials, and patients expressed satisfaction.
- Participation in the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is linked to slower cognitive decline, according to a first-of-its-kind long-term study.
- New research gives insights into critical sex-based differences in brain health, including how traumatic brain injuries impact women and men differently, and new understanding of cognitive symptoms for women undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer.

AAIC is the premier annual conference for presentation and discussion of the latest Alzheimer's and dementia research. This year's conference in Toronto attracted nearly 19,000 registered attendees and included more than 6,400 scientific submissions.

Positive Results from the U.S. Study to Protect Brain Health Through Lifestyle Intervention to Reduce Risk (U.S. POINTER) Study

The Alzheimer's Association U.S. Study to Protect Brain Health Through Lifestyle Intervention to Reduce Risk (U.S. POINTER) — a two-year, multi-site clinical trial testing two different lifestyle interventions in a representative population of older adults at risk for cognitive decline and dementia — found that both interventions improved cognition in older adults at risk of cognitive decline.

Trial participants in the structured intervention showed greater improvement on global cognition compared to the self-guided intervention, helping to protect against normal age-related decline for up to two years. This means that, relative to the self-guided group, participants in the structured group performed at a level comparable to adults one to nearly two years younger in age — an effect that likely increases resilience against cognitive decline.

This extra benefit was similar across all subgroups of U.S. POINTER participants — regardless of sex, ethnicity, genetic risk or heart health (blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels). More than 30% of participants were from groups that have been historically underrepresented in dementia research.

Both interventions focused on increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, cognitive and social challenge, and health monitoring. The structured intervention differed from the self-guided intervention in intensity, structure, accountability and the support provided.

U.S. POINTER was a large-scale, rigorous, randomized controlled clinical trial. These positive results underscore the message that healthy behavior has a powerful impact on brain health, and encourage us to look at the potential for a combination of a lifestyle program and drug treatment as the next frontier in the fight against cognitive decline and possibly dementia.

[Read the press release on U.S. POINTER study results.](#)

First Clinical Practice Guideline For Blood Biomarker Tests in Alzheimer's Diagnosis

The Alzheimer's Association released its first evidence-based clinical practice guideline (CPG) on the use of blood-based biomarker (BBM) tests at AAIC 2025, a big step toward transforming Alzheimer's diagnosis and management in specialty care settings. The CPG provides rigorous, evidence-based recommendations to help specialist clinicians to use BBM tests more confidently and consistently.

The recommendations are aimed at a variety of specialists in settings like neurology, psychiatry, geriatrics and more who diagnose and evaluate cognitive impairment, and are based on a review of available evidence through November 2024.

The recommendations suggest that specialists can use BBM tests as a triaging tool in the diagnostic workup of Alzheimer's when they have at least 90% sensitivity and 75% specificity, but a positive triaging test should always be confirmed with more traditional tests like cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) or amyloid positron emission tomography (PET) imaging. The guidelines permit BBM tests with at least 90% sensitivity and 90% specificity to substitute for PET imaging or CSF testing. However, experts caution that many commercially available BBM tests do not yet meet these thresholds.

This CPG is part of [ALZPro](#)[™] from the Alzheimer's Association, the comprehensive hub of resources and tools for health care professionals and researchers from across disciplines to reduce risk, advance early detection, improve care and expand equitable access for all communities.

[Read the press release on clinical practice guidelines for blood-based biomarker tests.](#)

Combination of Heart-Health Drugs May Also Protect the Brain

Taking a combination of common drugs used to treat blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes may have an added benefit: slower cognitive decline. A study of more than 4,500 older adults showed cognitive test scores similar to people three years younger for participants who took a combination of drugs targeting vascular or metabolic conditions, all of which are known risk factors for dementia.

Participants who were on all three of the vascular drugs had the greatest cognitive benefits, and their brains showed fewer signs of Alzheimer's-related changes at autopsy. For those who took only two of the drugs, the most effective pairing for cognitive protection was blood pressure and cholesterol drugs.

Lead Pollution Linked to Memory Problems in Older Adults

Historic pollution levels from the era of leaded gasoline may be contributing to cognitive issues 50 years later, according to a first-of-its-kind research study. Researchers tracked how exposure to airborne lead from 1960-1974 — when leaded gasoline use was at its highest — impacted brain health later in life. The report estimated that half the U.S. population at that time, more than 170 million people, were exposed to high lead levels in early childhood.

The researchers linked the pollution data from the 60s and 70s to a contemporary study conducted between 2012 and 2017. They estimated that 17 to 22% of people living in areas with moderate or high atmospheric lead reported memory issues. While leaded gas has long been phased out, other sources of exposure remain, such as old lead paint, pipes and industrial pollution. Experts say people who had past lead exposure should focus on reducing other risk factors for dementia, including managing high blood pressure, quitting smoking and avoiding social isolation.

[Read the press release on lead pollution and memory problems.](#)

Lifestyle Change Benefits May Be Strongest for Carriers of Alzheimer's Risk Gene

People with a higher genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease may benefit the most from healthy lifestyle interventions like walking, according to a decade of data from three large international studies. Older adults who carry the Alzheimer's risk gene known as APOE4 had higher cognitive benefits from non-drug interventions like exercise, diet and cognitive training than non-carriers.

In this study, walking was found to be the most effective healthy habit for slowing down cognitive damage. Like many healthy lifestyle changes, the key was making it a habit, as the study showed that sticking with it for at least two years produced cognitive benefits up to seven years later.

Participants in SNAP Food Assistance Program Had Slower Cognitive Decline

People who participated in the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) had slower cognitive decline over 10 years than non-participants, according to new research reported at AAIC 2025. Scientists examined data from the nationally representative Health and Retirement Study to compare participants in SNAP, which helps low-income individuals and families buy food, to those who were eligible for the program but didn't participate.

They found that SNAP participants had a 0.10% slower decline in overall cognitive function. The difference is significant in the long-term, adding up to an estimated two to three additional years of cognitive health over the study's 10-year period.

The study group of 1,131 SNAP participants studied included Whites, Blacks and Hispanics. A control group included 1,216 people who were SNAP-eligible but didn't participate. Researchers found that all groups benefitted, but White participants showed much slower decline than other groups. The findings highlight the potential benefits of food assistance programs to support older adults' cognitive health.

[Read the press release on SNAP benefits and slower cognitive decline.](#)

Real-World Results for New Alzheimer's Drugs Show Effectiveness, Patient Satisfaction

While newly available anti-amyloid Alzheimer's disease drugs have shown effectiveness in tightly controlled clinical trials, they have not been tested in real-world settings until now. Dozens of abstracts reported at AAIC 2025 showed that real world experience with the drugs lecanemab and donanemab produced comparable or better safety to large clinical trials, and patients were satisfied with the results.

Researchers tracked the drugs' safety and effectiveness in patients from a variety of settings including U.S. clinics, memory care centers and international universities. Several of the sites are part of the [Alzheimer's Network for Treatment and Diagnostics \(ALZ-NET\)](#), which was created by the Alzheimer's Association to collect voluntary real-world data about patients receiving the new treatments, track their long-term health, and share data with scientists and clinicians.

New Insights Into Cognitive Health Differences Between Men and Women

New research announced at AAIC 2025 sheds light on crucial differences between men and women in risk for Alzheimer's and other diseases that cause dementia. One study found that traumatic brain injuries (TBIs, a well-known risk factor for dementia) were more likely to shrink dementia-related areas of the brain in women than men. Another looked closer at "chemobrain" — declines in thinking and memory reported by about one-third of women receiving breast cancer chemotherapy.

Women make up nearly two-thirds of the more than 7 million Americans living with Alzheimer's. The chemobrain study is the first to show that brain changes, inflammation and shrinkage related to the cancer treatment are connected to symptoms like memory lapses and trouble focusing or finding words. The study adds to growing evidence that chemotherapy impacts brain health.

The Alzheimer's Association supports research to better understand sex-based differences in cognitive health and prevent negative side effects for chemo patients. Clinicians can learn more about early detection, diagnosis and treatment of dementia using [ALZPro](#), the newly-launched library of online tools and resources for professionals from the Alzheimer's Association.

The Alzheimer's Association extends a thank you to the AAIC 2025 Platinum Sponsors: Biogen, Eisai, Lilly and Novo Nordisk.

About the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®)

The Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) is the world's largest gathering of researchers from around the world focused on Alzheimer's and other dementias. As a part of the Alzheimer's Association's research program, AAIC serves as a catalyst for generating new knowledge about dementia and fostering a vital, collegial research community.

AAIC 2025 home page: www.alz.org/aaic/

AAIC 2025 newsroom: www.alz.org/aaic/pressroom.asp

AAIC 2025 hashtag: #AAIC25

About the Alzheimer's Association®

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

#