

# Sleepy after meals? You're raising your risk of dementia

If you practically pass out after meals or find yourself feeling desperate for something sweet, you are likely increasing your risk of developing [dementia or Alzheimer's](#) in your later years.

Post-meal sleepiness and sugar cravings are signs of insulin resistance, a condition in which blood sugar is chronically too high and aging your brain too quickly.

Look for other common signs of insulin resistance to know if you're at risk. For women this includes balding, growing more facial hair, and a deepening voice. PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) is also commonly linked with insulin resistance.

Men with insulin resistance may find they are growing breasts and they cry more easily.

People take on characteristics of the opposite sex because insulin resistance promotes excess testosterone production in women and estrogen production in men.

## What causes insulin resistance?

Whether you develop insulin resistance depends on your diet and physical activity. If you subsist on a high-carbohydrate diet, indulge regularly in sweets, and never or rarely exercise, your body must secrete high levels of insulin to lower your chronically high blood sugar.

The human body is designed to survive times of famine more so than times of excess calories. These chronic surges of insulin eventually exhaust the body's cells, causing them to refuse entry to insulin. This is "insulin resistance."

Starbucks pastries and syrupy coffees, soda, breads, pasta, rice, corn, potatoes, hours in front of the computer and television, overeating...it's no wonder rates of insulin resistance, diabetes, and Alzheimer's are soaring to shockingly [high levels](#).

## Alzheimer's is type 3 diabetes

We have long known insulin resistance is linked to many chronic health disorders, including obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, hormonal imbalances, and type 2 diabetes (insulin resistance is also called pre-diabetes).



However, the association between insulin resistance and [Alzheimer's](#) is so well established that many increasingly refer to Alzheimer's as "[type 3 diabetes](#)."

This is because a high-carbohydrate diet accelerates brain degeneration and atrophies the brain.

## Insulin necessary for brain function

Insulin does more than usher glucose into cells to manage blood sugar. Healthy levels of insulin also sustain energy in the brain, regulate inflammation, and help produce brain chemicals that regulate mood.

Insulin resistance does the opposite—it inflames the brain and impairs the [brain's ability](#) to perform even simple operations.

Unless it's reversed through diet and exercise, insulin resistance often progress to type 2 diabetes, even further increasing the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

## Reversing insulin resistance to prevent Alzheimer's

Some of the most powerful tools to prevent dementia and Alzheimer's are the same tools that can reverse insulin resistance. They include stabilizing blood sugar by eating a lower-carb diet (ratios vary based on the person), regular physical activity (it helps sensitize cells to insulin), and a diet that is primarily vegetables (they foster health-promoting gut bacteria).

This is a broad overview of how your blood sugar levels affect the health and longevity of your brain. For customized advice, contact my office.