

SEARCH

THE WEB CNN.com

SEARCH

Powered by

- Home Page
- World
- U.S.
- Weather
- Business
- Sports
- Politics
- Law
- Technology
- Science & Space
- Health
- Entertainment
- Travel
- Education
- Special Reports
- Video
- Autos

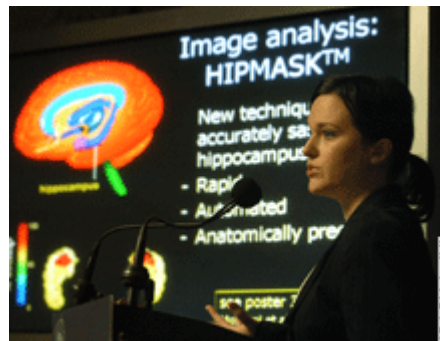
# HEALTH

## Scientists find early signs of Alzheimer's

Research concentrates on first regions of brain affected

Monday, June 20, 2005; Posted: 9:57 a.m. EDT (13:57 GMT)

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A subtle change in a memory-making brain region seems to predict who will



Lead researcher Lisa Mosconi said the hippocampus seems to be affected first by Alzheimer's.

**MORE**

- Latest He
- Allergies
- Cardiolog
- Dermatol

**me**

PUTTING BRE

**a**  
Point your

onlin  
is  
clie

- Bachel
- Admin i
- Finance
- Master'
- Admin i
- Finance
- Bachel
- Crimina
- Bachel
- Busines
- Bachel
- Busines
- Healthc
- Bachel
- Visual (
- Bachel
- Informa
- Master'
- Busines
- Master:
- Busines
- Healthc
- Master'
- Informa
- Master'
- Educati

CL  
TO LE

**FREE** Free Samples

**FREE** Grocery Coupons

**FREE** Baby Coupons

**FREE** Free Stuff

**SERVICES**

- E-mail Newsletters
- Your E-mail Alerts
- RSS **XML**
- CNNtoGO
- Contact Us

**SEARCH**

WEB CNN.com

SEARCH Powered by **YAHOO!** search

advertiser links [what's this?](#)

**Refinance Rates Hit Record Lows**  
Get \$150,000 loan for \$720 per month. Refinance while rates are low.  
[www.lowermybills.com](http://www.lowermybills.com)

**Equity Loans for Bad Credit Homeowners**  
Home equity loans for homeowners with bad credit. Pay off bills with a home...  
[clickserve.cc-dt.com](http://clickserve.cc-dt.com)

**Save on All Your Calls with Vonage**  
When looking for local regional and long distance calling, use Vonage to make...  
[www.vonage.com](http://www.vonage.com)

**MyCashNow - \$100 - \$1,500 Overnight**  
Payday Loan Cash goes in your account overnight. Very low fees. Fast decisions....  
[www.mycashnow.com](http://www.mycashnow.com)

### HEALTH LIBRARY

get Alzheimer's disease nine years before symptoms appear,

## scientists reported Sunday.

The finding is part of a wave of research aimed at early detection of the deadly dementia -- and one day perhaps even preventing it.

Researchers scanned the brains of middle-aged and older people while they were still healthy. They discovered that lower energy usage in a part of the brain called the hippocampus correctly signaled who would get Alzheimer's or a related memory impairment 85 percent of the time.

"We found the earliest predictor," said the lead researcher, Lisa Mosconi of New York University School of Medicine. "The hippocampus seems to be the very first region to be affected."

But it is too soon to offer Alzheimer's-predicting PET scans. The discovery must be confirmed. Also, there are serious ethical questions about how soon people should know that Alzheimer's is approaching when nothing yet can be done to forestall the disease.

Still, the discovery may provide leads to scientists searching for therapies to at least delay the onset of the degenerative brain disease. It already affects 4.5 million people in the U.S. and is predicted to strike 14 million by 2050 as the population ages.

Moreover, researchers are honing in on lifestyle choices that may help protect the brain in the first place.

"It's exciting that we can even talk about prevention," said William Thies, scientific director of the Alzheimer's Association. He noted that just 10 years ago there was hardly any research into that possibility.

Among the findings presented Sunday at the association's first Alzheimer's prevention conference:

- People who drink fruit or vegetable juice at least three times a week seem four times less likely to develop Alzheimer's than nonjuice drinkers, according to a study of 1,800 elderly Japanese-Americans. The theory is that juice contains high levels of polyphenols, compounds that may play a brain-protective role.
- Less education, gum disease early in life, or a stroke were more important than genes in determining who got dementia, concluded a study of 100 dementia patients with healthy identical twins. Education stimulates neuronal growth; gum disease is a marker of brain-harming inflammation.
- Decreasing social activity in old age is a risk factor, a National Institute on Aging study suggests. It is not clear if the men in the study became less social because Alzheimer's already was at work, but social activity is mentally stimulating.

A brain-healthy lifestyle aside, a big quest is to develop ways to identify Alzheimer's disease before symptoms emerge -- finding biomarkers that could be targets for preventive therapies.

Think of it as hunting the equivalent of the cholesterol test for Alzheimer's, Dr. Neill

In association with  MayoClinic.com

• [Health Library](#)

### RELATED

- [Alzheimer's Association](#) 
- [National Institute on Aging](#) 

### YOUR E-MAIL ALERTS

Pharmaceuticals

Science and Technology

Applied Sciences

National Institute on Aging

or [Create Your Own](#)

[Manage Alerts](#) | [What Is This?](#)

Graff-Radford of the Mayo Clinic said.

He measured blood levels of different types of beta amyloid, the sticky protein that makes up Alzheimer's hallmark brain plaques, in 565 people. Those with lowest ratios of a particular amyloid type were three times more likely to develop dementia within five years.

The reason: Probably less amyloid was floating in the blood because it was sticking in the brain instead.

PET scans already can show Alzheimer's plaques in advanced disease. Mosconi's study is the first to so rigorously examine people's brains before symptoms appear.

PET, or positron emission tomography, scans show images of how brains use glucose, or sugar, which is the brain's main fuel.

Mosconi scanned 53 healthy people. She tracked them for up to 24 years. Six so far have developed Alzheimer's and 19 developed an Alzheimer's precursor called "mild cognitive impairment," or MCI. Those people showed less glucose metabolism in the hippocampus than the still healthy.

Other research supports the hippocampus' early role.

University of Wisconsin researchers gave a different brain scan, called a functional MRI, to healthy adult children of Alzheimer's patients. The researchers found that the hippocampus was not as active as in people without that familial risk.

To prove if these early indicators are real, the National Institute on Aging, with financial help from the pharmaceutical industry and Alzheimer's Association, is beginning a \$60 million study to scan the brains of 800 older Americans and try to pin down Alzheimer's earliest biological changes.

That Alzheimer's begins developing so early means even young people should adopt a brain-healthy lifestyle, said Dr. Mark Sager of the Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer's Prevention. "what we're hoping is that 55 is not too late," he said.

*Copyright 2005 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.*

#### Story Tools

- [SAVE THIS](#)
[E-MAIL THIS](#)
  
[PRINT THIS](#)
[MOST POPULAR](#)

advertisement

[Click Here to try 4 Free Trial Issues of Time!](#)



## HEALTH

[Section Page](#) | [Video](#) | [Health Library](#)

[Scientists find early signs of Alzheimer's](#)



- [Faked orgasms don't fool brain scans](#)
- [New trial for AIDS patient vs. McDonald's](#)
- [Farmers take offense to 'couch potato'](#)

## TOP STORIES


[Home Page](#) | [Video](#) | [Most Popular](#)

[Bomb kills anti-Syria politician in Beirut](#)



- [Poll: Nearly 6 in 10 Americans oppose war](#)
- [Soldiers: Saddam a 'clean freak' who loves Doritos](#)
- [Dems block Bolton again, Bush keeps options open](#)

[International Edition](#)

Languages 

[CNN TV](#)

[CNN International](#)

[Headline News](#)

[Transcripts](#)

[Advertise with](#)

**SEARCH**



THE WEB





CNN.com

**SEARCH**

Powered by 

© 2005 Cable News Network LP, LLLP.  
A Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms](#) under which this service is provided to you.  
Read our [privacy guidelines](#). [Contact us](#).

 All external sites will open  
CNN.com does not endorse:  
 [Add RSS Headlines](#)