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## Welcome to Preventia's newsletter!



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## Foreword

**Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, also known as chronic diseases, are diseases that are not transmissible from one person to another, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases. NCDs are the result of **unhealthy lifestyles**, e.g. tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and use of alcohol, leading to metabolic and physiological changes. In European countries, NCDs are responsible for an enormous part of the burden that public health systems in the Member States are facing. The increasing rates of deaths related to NCDs in Europe are concerning, but although running rampant, the complex health issues caused by NCDs can be tackled, if we improve prevention measures and promote health.

Healthy diets are a key aspect of our lifestyle, and can help tackling the rise of NCDs. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats is essential for our overall health, and reduces the risk of chronic illnesses.

The **Preventia project aims to decrease the spreading of NCDs across the EU**, while reducing health inequalities and fostering cooperation and exchanges between the EU Member States.

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## News from the Project

*Stay tuned for news about the consortium and developments from the project*

### **SAFE, LCI, EEKE, CEIP, Promote Ukraine, U.DI.CON, ADOC**

Over the past two years, we have worked closely with schools, migration centres, NGOs, and medical institutions to deliver targeted programmes that advance health equity and promote disease prevention across Europe.

Key highlights include:

#### **-Empowering schools in underserved communities**

We developed and delivered tailored educational materials and conducted over 20 training sessions across Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania, reaching more than 500 children and adolescents.

#### **-Fostering healthy lifestyles through community engagement**

Our community-based culinary workshops brought together migrants in Greece, Italy, Lithuania, and Croatia, promoting healthy eating habits while encouraging cultural exchange. In total, 107 participants from migration centres took part.

#### **-Strengthening medical collaboration across borders**

A twinning programme at Galeazzi–Sant’Ambrogio Hospital in Milan connected healthcare professionals from Belgium, Croatia, and Lithuania, supporting knowledge exchange and capacity building.

#### **-Mobilising citizens for better health**

In Athens, a public awareness campaign engaged over 650 citizens, raising awareness around prevention and healthy living.

Additionally, we conducted an assessment of NCD policies in partner countries. The findings will inform a forthcoming policy brief and public health guidelines, ensuring evidence-based recommendations for future actions.

Furthermore, for consumer empowerment, SAFE launched BiteWatch®, a free mobile phone application to make informed food choices. By scanning food products, users access nutritional insights and identify potentially harmful ingredients.

The app can be downloaded at the following links:

[iOS](#)

[Android](#)

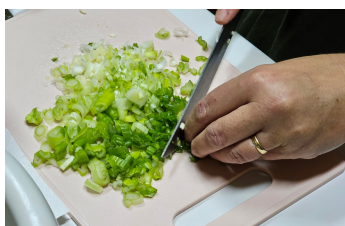
In the upcoming months, we will launch:

-Citizen and social media campaigns to raise awareness and improve health literacy on NCD prevention;

-NCD-focused workshops, partnering with NGOs and Ukrainian professionals.

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### **Around My Kitchen Table event in Croatia**



Our project partner CEIP organised the “Around My Kitchen Table” [workshop in Croatia](#) on 20 November. The event took place in Belišće in cooperation with the association PUKS – Support in general crisis situations, which works to support vulnerable groups and strengthen community resilience through education, integration and psychosocial programmes.

The workshop brought together participants from different cultural backgrounds in a warm and informal setting around a shared kitchen table. Personal testimonies were collected, capturing participants’ experiences, stories and perspectives on nutrition, health and life in a new community.

The concept is simple yet powerful. Sharing a meal helps build trust and creates space for exchanging culture, identity and personal stories. Food, as a key part of cultural identity, becomes a bridge for understanding and mutual respect.

The workshop also promoted healthy eating as an important way to prevent chronic diseases, especially among vulnerable groups such as migrants. Participants under temporary protection from Ukraine prepared traditional dishes including borscht, stuffed eggs, apple pies, sardines and garlic sandwiches.

The event in Belišće highlighted how combining health education, intercultural dialogue and shared experiences can help build a more inclusive and health-conscious society.



*Uncover the most relevant news about non-communicable diseases, nutrition and health*

**Four in ten cancer cases could be prevented globally.** World Health Organization, 3 February 2026

Up to four in ten cancer cases worldwide could be prevented, according to a new global analysis from the World Health Organization (WHO) and its International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The study examines 30 preventable causes, including tobacco, alcohol, high body mass index, physical inactivity, air pollution, ultraviolet radiation – and for the first time – nine cancer-causing infections.

**Obesity and high blood pressure may lead to a higher risk of dementia.** *Nutrition Insights*, 26 January 2026

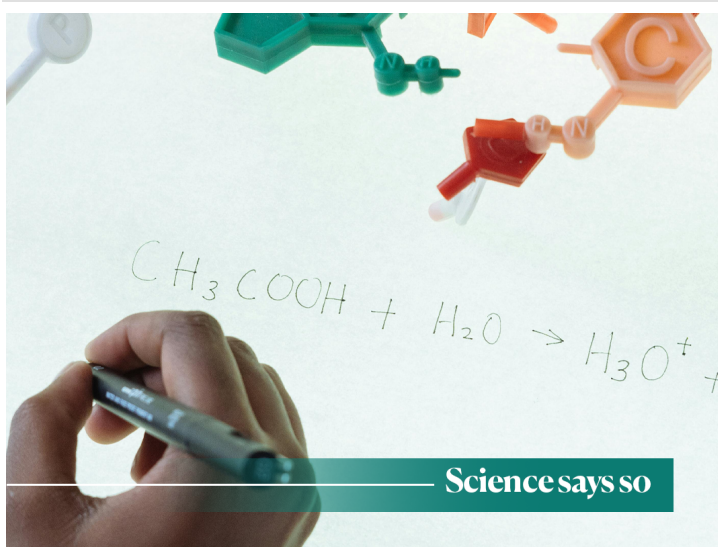
Dementia may pose a greater risk for people with obesity and high blood pressure, according to new research. The study analysed data from participants in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the UK to pinpoint a causal link between higher body weight and the progressive brain disease.

**Not All Diseases Are Equal: How a World Economic Forum Report quietly reshaped the NCD agenda.** *Health Policy Watch*, 22 January 2026

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) latest report on acting early on NCDs signals more than urgency. It signals a shift in what counts. Beneath familiar calls for earlier action sits a quieter move: a re-ordering of NCD priorities themselves. Some diseases now sit firmly at the centre of the agenda. Others, no less prevalent or consequential, are absent or muted.

**New grants kickstart major effort on women's cardiovascular health.** *Novo Nordisk Foundation*, 20 January 2026

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among women worldwide, yet for decades, research and clinical practice have focused primarily on male biology. This has left critical gaps in our understanding of how cardiovascular disease (CVD) affects women – gaps that translate into inequities in diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes. The Novo Nordisk Foundation's Female Heart programme aims to address these disparities, with the first initiatives – two open calls and four research grants – now underway.



Science says so

**Strengthening cardiovascular disease prevention in Europe**, *The Lancet Public Health*, February 2026

According to the State of Cardiovascular Health in the European Union (EU) report, published on Dec 15, 2025, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death and disability across the EU, accounting for a third of all deaths, every year, affecting more than 60 million people, and an annual economic cost exceeding €282 billion. Population ageing is expected to further amplify this crisis. Most of this burden is preventable.

**From Tobacco to Ultraprocessed Food: How Industry Engineering Fuels the Epidemic of Preventable Disease**, *The Milbank Quarterly*, 2 February 2026

Ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) now dominate the global food supply and are strongly associated with risks for heart disease, cancers, metabolic disease, diabetes, and obesity. UPFs are likely associated with rates of neurologic issues such as dementia and Parkinson's disease and predict premature death. Drawing on the history of tobacco regulation, the authors examine how the design, marketing, and distribution of UPFs mirror those of industrial tobacco products.

**The association between childhood body size, adulthood lifestyle, and risk of 50 health conditions**, *Communications medicine*, 12 January 2026

The long-term health consequences of childhood body size and whether it can be mitigated by a healthy adult lifestyle remains unclear. This study aims to explore the associations between childhood body size and the risk of mortality and major non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and the role of a lifestyle in adulthood in these associations.



## EU Regulatory Updates

*Find out the latest positions, progresses and regulatory developments on health, nutrition and NCDs prevention*

**Commission marks five years of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan with strengthened actions to fight cancer**, European Commission, 3 February 2026

Ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February, the European Commission has unveiled an update of the European Code Against Cancer. The revised Code sets out practical ways to help prevent the disease and is the result of four years of work by over 60 European public health experts. The guidance is based on scientific evidence and is tailored to the EU population and health systems.

**Child and adolescent health and well-being strategy 2026-2030**, Unicef, January 2026

Children and adolescents in Europe and Central Asia face mounting health challenges, with stalled progress on child mortality, rising infectious diseases and widespread mental health concerns. These issues underpin the Child and Adolescent Health and Well-being Strategy 2026–2030, developed by UNICEF and WHO with input from young people. The strategy is bold, cross-sectoral and measurable, aiming not only to improve key indicators but to address underlying causes by strengthening the child-health workforce and curbing harmful marketing to young people.

**EU cardiovascular health plan: the Safe Hearts Plan**, European Commission, 16 December 2025

Published on 16 December 2025, the Safe Hearts Plan is the EU's first comprehensive strategy to tackle cardiovascular diseases, the leading cause of death in Europe.

is preparing an own-initiative report on cardiovascular diseases (rapporteur Romana Jerković, Croatia, S&D). While it is not a law, it helps shape future policies and encourages the European Commission and countries to act.



### *Upcoming events on NCDs, prevention, and healthy nutrition*

[One Health Summit](#), organised by the French Government, 5-7 April 2026, Lyon, France

[From Evidence to Action - Connecting Food, Nutrition, and Health](#), organised by Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL), 21 April 2026, Brussels, Belgium

[European Public Health Week \(EUPHW\) 2026](#), organised by European Public Health Association, 4-8 May 2026, Brussels, Belgium

[Urban and global synergies: shaping the future of public health with climate resilience, equity and innovation](#), organised by European Public Health Association, 10-13 November 2026, Bilbao, Spain



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*Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or HaDEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*

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