



Healthy Eating Tip

Boosting the Brain

When it comes to love, the brain and the heart tend to be at odds. However, when it comes to health, they could not be more on the same page. Similar to the heart, the brain relies on good blood flow and nutrition for optimal functioning. Healthy lifestyle choices, such as physical activity and good nutrition, always help keep the brain healthy with sharp memory. Furthermore, there are vitamins, minerals, and dietary patterns that have been linked to better cognitive function.

Got Brain Fog?

Try increasing these nutrients in your diet to help promote a healthy brain:

- **Omega-3 DHA fatty acids** are found in fish and shellfish, such as salmon, mackerel, herring, anchovies, and sardines, as well as maternal milk (breast milk). DHA (Docosahexaenoic acid) is particularly important for brain functioning as it plays a part in the growth and functional development of brain cells. However, it is commonly overlooked in the Western diet.
- **Lutein** is a yellow pigmented carotenoid found in egg yolk, avocado, and dark leafy greens. It is shown to aid in brain health and preserve one's memory. Studies have also shown greater improvement in brain function when lutein is combined with omega-3 DHA.
- **Vitamins (B, E, C, and D)** are found in various fruits and vegetables (i.e. dark berries, dark leafy greens, avocados, and bell peppers) as well as whole grains, nuts and seeds. All of these vitamins have been identified as playing important roles in the development of the brain by assisting with energy production, reducing oxidation, and synthesizing neurotransmitters in the brain.
- **Curcumin** is a compound that gives turmeric its yellowish color. It is shown to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation in the brain. This correlation is most evident in India, since it is a high consumer of turmeric while also having one of the lowest rates of Alzheimer's.

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From Corporate Fitness Works Registered Dietitian, Kelsey Cain

Healthy Eating Continued...

Savor the Memories

The risk of developing Alzheimer's and other types of dementia have increased drastically over the years, including 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's today. These statistics have led to an increase in research on how to effectively boost brain function, even into old age. Research has shown that certain dietary patterns designed to reduce oxidative stress, inflammation, insulin resistance, and promote overall cardiac health help to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and slow the rate of cognitive decline.

The Memory Preservation Nutrition Program

The MPN Program is an evidence-based program developed in 2005 that focuses on consuming whole foods in an effort to improve cognitive and emotional health, while increasing overall health. The program highlights six key strategies to target specific biological outcomes:

1. *Increase the variety of antioxidants consumed*
2. *Increase the consumption of omega-3s and healthy fats*
3. *Increase anti-inflammatory foods*
4. *Reduce insulin resistance*
5. *Reduce LDL cholesterol and intake of saturated fats*
6. *Consume adequate amounts of vitamins B, D, and E*

The program has been implemented in various long-term care facilities and has shown participants having more energy, positive moods, and more likely to engage in activities. It has also been shown to assist in the management of diabetes and slowing the progression of heart disease.

The Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet, known for being the gold standard for reducing heart disease, shares many similarities with the MPN program. It encourages the consumption of fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, poultry, and healthy fats such as fish, nuts, and olive oil in combination with regular exercise. Although, this eating pattern was originally intended for a healthy heart, it provides many benefits for a healthy brain as well.

Bottom Line

What can we conclude from these dietary patterns? There are specific nutrients that play a direct role in adequate brain functioning. Additionally, if you are consuming a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats, it will not only lead to a healthy brain but also overall improved health.

Include These	Limit These
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green leafy vegetables: every day• Other vegetables: at least once per day• Nuts: every day• Berries: at least twice per week• Beans: every other day• Whole grains: three times per day• Fish: at least once per week• Poultry: at least twice per week• Olive oil• Wine: one glass per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red meats• Butter and stick margarine: less than 1 tablespoon per day• Cheese: less than one serving per week• Pastries and sweets: limit• Fried or fast food: less than one serving per week

<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/090115p28.shtml>

Sources:

www.todaysdietitian.com

www.mayoclinic.org

www.brainwellness.com