

EAT WELL, AGE WELL. BRAIN HEALTHY FOODS.

Can Diet Affect Our Brain Health?

We know many ways to reduce the chance of chronic diseases affecting the body. But what are the ways to reduce cognitive decline?

Food choices are a great opportunity to reduce the risk of getting Alzheimer's, dementia, and Parkinson's disease.

According to New York University of School of Medicine, vitamin B12, vitamin D, folate, beta-carotene and omega-3 fatty acids are nutrients associated with a decrease risk in loss of cognitive function.

Many of these nutrients can be found in vegetables, berries and tea.

Berry Pink Smoothie: Serves 2



Photo Courtesy of Pixabay.com

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cup skim milk
- 1 sliced banana
- 1 ½ cup frozen mixed berries
- ¾ cup Greek vanilla yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey (optional)

Directions

1. Place the milk, banana, berries and yogurt into a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into glass and top with berries for a little extra flavor and texture.
3. Pour the other serving into a refrigerator safe glass and enjoy it later.

This smoothie provides many vitamins. The berries can help boost brain function and prevent memory loss.

Recipe adapted from: Sarah Welch

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What is a Brain-Healthy Diet?

A brain-healthy diet consists of foods that keep the brain at its peak ability.

The omega-3 fatty acid, DHA, is especially important for memory. It is found in fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, herring, and tuna.

Broccoli, dark leafy greens, and nuts also aide in memory. Antioxidants and anti-inflammatory foods such as blueberries and turmeric help improve brain functioning and may reduce memory loss.

Foods that should be limited include red meat, solid fats, and sweets.

Why is a Brain-Healthy Diet Important?

The brain is the control center of the entire body; therefore, it is very important that one consumes a brain-healthy diet. This will help maintain memory, concentration, and other mental tasks.

Baked Salmon with Broccoli:

Serves 2



Photos Courtesy of Pexels.com

Ingredients:

- ½ pound salmon fillet, skin on (2 ¼-lb fillets)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 lb frozen broccoli florets

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Line a sheet pan with foil.
3. Mince 1 clove of garlic
4. In a small bowl, whisk together minced garlic, olive oil, honey, and Dijon mustard.
5. Place salmon skin side down on the prepared baking sheet.
6. Pour the sauce over the salmon.
7. Bake for 18-20 minutes until the internal temperature reaches 145°F at the thickest part of the fish.
8. Meanwhile, steam the broccoli according to the package instructions.
9. Serve and enjoy your brain-healthy meal.

Recipe adapted from: <https://kristineskitchenblog.com/our-favorite-easy-oven-baked-salmon/>

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Why Should I Eat Brain Healthy Foods?

It is important to consume brain healthy foods as it will keep the brain operating at its peak performance! Brain health often decreases as we age so fueling your brain with the right foods is vital. Consuming foods that are healthy for your brain will also aid in improving memory and concentration. Good brain health has also been linked to decreased risk of depression and Alzheimer's.

Blueberry Banana Smoothie

Serves 1



Photo Courtesy of Pixabay.com

Ingredients

- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- 1 large banana
- ½ cup milk of choice
- 2 Tbsp flaxseeds

Directions

1. Combine ingredients in blender
2. Blend on high for 1-1 ½ minutes until smooth
3. Pour in glass and serve

Benefits

Blueberries are packed with antioxidants that aid in improving memory. Flax seeds are a great source of healthy fats that improve brain health.

Recipe adapted from: <https://fitfoodiefinds.com/blueberry-banana-smoothie/>

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The Mediterranean Diet

Research shows that a Mediterranean-style diet rich in fish, whole grains, green leafy vegetables, olives, and nuts, helps maintain brain health and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

The Mediterranean diet emphasizes eating fish instead of red meat. Fish is a great source of omega-3, the type of fatty acid your body cannot produce, and it's good for your brain. At least twice a week, eat five ounces of omega-3 rich fish, such as salmon, cod, haddock, tuna, or halibut. Walnuts, flaxseed, and soybeans are plant sources of omega-3 fatty acid.

Loading your plate with fruits and vegetables can also be beneficial for your brain health. Spinach, kale, broccoli and other leafy green vegetables are rich in many brain-loving nutrients. Blueberries, raspberries and blackberries are packed with antioxidants. Antioxidants can potentially slow aging in the brain and elsewhere.

Kale Salad with Creamy Strawberry Poppyseed Dressing: Serves 2



Photo by Iina Luoto from Pexels

Ingredients:

- 2 cups kale
- 3 cups berries (of your choice)
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup feta cheese
- 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup strawberries chopped
- 1 Tbsp. milk
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- 4 tsp cider vinegar
- 2 tsp poppy seeds

Directions

1. In a large bowl add kale, strawberries, blueberries, sliced almonds and feta cheese. Toss.
2. To make the dressing: Add the Greek yogurt, strawberries, milk, sugar, and cider vinegar to a food processor or blender and pulse until smooth. Whisk in the poppy seeds.
3. Drizzle the desired amount over the salad and toss.

Variations: Add olives, cherry tomatoes, leftover chicken/turkey, tuna/salmon, beans, etc.