



Tips for Using Diet and Nutrition to Maintain a Healthy Brain

According to current medical research in the specialty of neuroscience, the path to brain fitness – including the delay and possible prevention of memory loss – begins with good nutrition!

The Ingredients of a Brain-Healthy Diet

In the article, **Adopt a Brain-Healthy Diet**, the **Alzheimer's Association** offers the following key recommendations for keeping your brain healthy and maintaining cognitive functions such as memory.

Manage your body weight – A long-term study of 1,500 adults found that those who were obese in middle age were *twice* as likely to develop dementia in later life. Those who also had high cholesterol and high blood pressure had *six times* the risk of dementia. For best results, adopt an overall food lifestyle rather than a short-term diet. And remember, always eat in moderation!

Reduce your intake of foods high in fat and cholesterol – Studies have shown that a high intake of saturated fat and cholesterol clogs the arteries and is associated with higher risk for [Alzheimer's disease](#). However, HDL (or “good”) cholesterol may help protect brain cells. Use mono- and polyunsaturated fats such as olive oil and try baking or grilling food instead of frying.

Vitamins may be helpful – Currently, there is some indication that vitamins such as vitamin E, or vitamins E and C together, vitamin B12 and folate, may be important in lowering your risk of developing Alzheimer's. A brain-healthy diet will help increase your intake of these vitamins and the trace elements necessary for the body to use them effectively.

Increase your intake of protective foods – Current medical research indicates that certain foods may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, and also protect brain cells. While not enough information is available to pinpoint what quantities of these foods might be most beneficial for brain health, they have demonstrated cognitive benefits. Protective foods include:

- In general, dark-skinned fruits and vegetables have the highest levels of naturally occurring antioxidant levels. These vegetables include: kale, spinach, Brussels sprouts, alfalfa sprouts, broccoli, beets, red bell peppers, onions, corn and eggplant. Fruits with high antioxidant levels include prunes, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, oranges, red grapes and cherries.
- Cold-water fish contain beneficial omega-3 fatty acids: halibut, mackerel, salmon, trout and tuna.
- Some nuts can be a useful part of your diet; almonds, pecans and walnuts are a good source of vitamin E, an antioxidant.

Drink Plenty of Water – Water is also essential for the electrical transmissions within the nervous system that enable sensing, learning, thinking and acting.

Guiding. Caring. Inspiring.