

Healthy Brain Diet!

According to the most current research, a brain-healthy diet is one that reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes, encourages good blood flow to the brain and is low in fat and cholesterol.

Like the heart and the rest of your body, the brain needs the right balance of nutrients, including protein and sugar, to function well.

A brain-healthy diet is most effective when combined with physical and mental activity and social interaction.

Managing your body weight for overall good health of brain and body. Some studies suggest that people who are obese in middle age are twice as likely to develop dementia in later life. Also those who also have high cholesterol and high blood pressure have a six times increased risk of dementia. Therefore adopting an overall food lifestyle, rather than a short-term diet, and eating in moderation may help protect your brain.

Reducing your intake of foods that are high in fat and cholesterol. There are studies that show that a high intake of saturated fat and cholesterol clogs the arteries and is associated with a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. However, HDL (or "good") cholesterol may help protect brain cells. Try increasing your use of mono- and polyunsaturated fats, such as olive oil, for example, and bake or grill food instead of frying.

Increase your intake of protective foods. Current research suggests that certain foods may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, and appear to protect brain cells.

- In general, dark-skinned fruits and vegetables have the highest levels of naturally occurring antioxidant levels. Such vegetables include: kale, spinach, Brussels sprouts, alfalfa sprouts, broccoli, beets, red bell pepper, onion, 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: eg 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.

Not enough information is currently available to indicate what quantities of these foods would have to be consumed in order to have a detectable benefit on brain health.

Vitamins may be helpful. 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.

Visit these websites for more information:

<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

The human brain is dependent on the lifestyle of the person who owns it - so it is important to have a healthy lifestyle. That includes the way you drink alcohol and the amount you drink! Alcohol can destroy brain cells, so drinking a lot means a lot of brain cells will be killed. Maybe you might choose to only drink alcohol on special occasions, maybe a glass of wine at the weekend or with a meal during the week. It is a choice, your choice, but think about making a healthy brain choice!!

You might want to look at these websites for information on safe levels of alcohol

<http://www.drinkingandyou.com> <http://www.drinking.nhs.uk/>