

How To Eat For Your Brain

SUNRISE SENIOR LIVING

Recent research from the Kahn Academy revealed that the brain is like a muscle, and like any other muscle it gets stronger - and smarter - with the proper nutrition. When it comes to senior dining, especially among those with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, the right diet can actually help delay memory loss.

When the body is going through difficult changes, a good diet is always recommended to help internally balance everything out. Why should it be any different when it comes to taking preventative measures for your brain? Check out this list of foods you should add to your grocery list that are good for your brain's development:

1. Whole grains

Whole grains have been pushed on diets for a while now, but the grain really makes a difference, reported BBC Good Foods. If you're looking for ways to focus better, feeding the brain the proper nutrients is the first way to help garner that concentration. This source of energy actually comes from glucose, which is transported to the brain. Whole grains with a low Glycemic Index allow glucose to slowly enter the bloodstream, so you can remain more alert throughout the day. Most of your everyday items in the grocery store come with whole grain alternatives. Just check the packaging of your favorite cereals, breads and pastas to make sure you're getting what you need.

2. Blueberries

According to U.S. News & World Report, this little berry has been packing a punch since 1999, when researchers discovered it helped aging rats navigate mazes better. The source summarized the Nurses' Health Study that was conducted on 16,000 women ages 70 and older. Researchers found that those who ate more berries actually had slower mental reduction. Dr. Michael Greger, physician and founder of NutritionFacts.org, explained to U.S. News & World Report the exact magnitude of the power of a diet with berries.

"Women with a higher intake of berries appeared to have delayed cognitive aging by 2.5 years. So it's like your brain is 2.5 years younger if you're eating berries," Greger said.

3. Cabbage

But if you aren't a fan of blueberries, Greger found that brightly colored cabbage - especially the purple and red cabbage found in coleslaw - has the same health benefits as its berry counterpart.

4. Fish oil

A stinky option, yes, but this is where the most effective omega-3 fats come from, said the BBC. Omega-3 fatty acids are also great for attentiveness, but are not made by the body. As this can only be obtained via diet, you have to be sure to work it in somehow. Fish like trout, salmon, mackerel and herring are all great sources of this essential fatty acid.

5. Tomatoes

This fruit is a great aid to those with Alzheimer's disease, as it protects against free radical damage to cells, explained the BBC. This miracle antioxidant is known as lycopene and can be enjoyed a variety of ways - it just depends how you like to eat your tomatoes. Grow your own or head to your local farmers market to get some fresh off the farm.

6. Pumpkin seeds

This fall treat doesn't have to be enjoyed seasonally. The source said that just a handful of these seeds will give you the daily amount of zinc your brain needs for enhancing memory and thinking skills.