

Alzheimer's & dementia prevention pillar #2: Healthy diet

Eat to protect glial cells.

Researchers believe that glial cells may help remove debris and toxins from the brain that can contribute to Alzheimer's disease. Consuming foods such as ginger, green tea, fatty fish, soy products, blueberries, and other dark berries may protect these important cells from damage.

Just like the rest of your body, your brain needs a nutritious diet to operate at its best. Focus on eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, lean protein, and healthy fats.

Eating habits that reduce inflammation and provide a steady supply of fuel are best. These food tips will keep you protected:

- **Follow a Mediterranean diet.** Eating a heart-healthy Mediterranean diet rich in fish, nuts, whole grains, olive oil, and abundant fresh produce. Treat yourself to the occasional glass of red wine and square of dark chocolate.
- **Avoid trans fats and saturated fats.** Reduce your consumption by avoiding full-fat dairy products, red meat, fast food, fried foods, and packaged and processed foods.
- **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** What's good for the heart is also good for the brain, so by reducing your risk of heart disease, you also lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease.
- **Get plenty of omega-3 fats.** Evidence suggests that omega-3 fatty acids may help prevent Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Food sources include cold-water fish such as salmon, tuna, trout, mackerel, and sardines. You can also supplement with fish oil.
- **Eat 4-6 small meals throughout the day, rather than 3 large meals.** Eating at regular intervals helps to maintain consistent blood sugar levels. Also avoid refined carbohydrates high in sugar and white flour, which rapidly spike glucose levels and inflame your brain.
- **Eat across the rainbow.** Emphasize fruits and vegetables across the color spectrum to maximize protective antioxidants and vitamins. Daily servings of berries and green leafy vegetables should be part of your brain-protective regimen.
- **Enjoy daily cups of tea.** Regular consumption of green tea may enhance memory and mental alertness and slow brain aging. White and oolong teas are also particularly brain healthy. Drinking 2-4 cups daily has proven benefits. Although not as powerful as tea, coffee also confers brain benefits.