

This is good stuff. It not only prevents dementia, but also cancer, heart problems, MS, arthritis..... John Bell

New research - dementia and Alzheimer's linked to poor diets

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Reference: Grant WB.

Trends in diet and Alzheimer's disease during the nutrition transition in Japan and developing countries.

[J Alzheimer's Dis. 2014;38\(3\):611-20. doi: 10.3233/JAD-130719.](https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-130719)

WORRIED about losing your mind? Me too! So here is some good news. It seems that a plant-based diet may be one of your best hopes for remembering who you are, and having a clear, active mind in old age. So this week we look at the growing rates of dementia and the top 8 food related things we can do about it.

Recent research shows that dementia may well be another of the lifestyle based, chronic degenerative diseases - just like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, MS and cancer; and as such, can be prevented by eating well and having a healthy lifestyle.

Most of us these days know someone whose mind is not what it used to be. Those of us into our 50s, 60s and on, may well be noticing the memory slips, the "senior moments" and find ourselves wondering what the future holds. Those of us who are younger may well be noticing the same issues in their parents or other elders we value and find ourselves wondering, "is this the beginning of something really scary".

The fact is that dementia and Alzheimer's are tough conditions. They can seemingly rob people of their maturity whilst creating large care loads for families, friends and the community.

What to do?

Many of us will know that recent developments in neuroplasticity have established that the 'use it or lose it principle' is real. Yet many of us will know people who had active minds that still descended into dementia in one form or another.

So here is the next link. There is a rapidly growing body of evidence linking lifestyle and dementia; specifically that what we eat can accelerate cognitive and memory loss, while the right food choices can protect us and maybe they can even foster ongoing mental development through old age.

Mediterranean diet

Here is the scale of the problem. According to a recent report, the number of people living with dementia is expected to triple worldwide to 135 million by 2050. At the same time, a group of leading doctors is calling on the global health community to refocus the battle against dementia away from 'dubious' drugs and to the benefits of a Mediterranean diet instead.

Addressing the UK's Health Secretary, some of that country's leading doctors - including the former chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners Professor Clare Gerada - have said that persuading people to eat a diet based mostly on fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, fish and olive oil is "possibly the best strategy currently available".

They expressed concern that this information was largely being ignored because of the "low awareness and prestige given to diet by many in the medical profession".

They said that a healthier diet could have a "far greater impact in the fight to reduce the dramatic increasing rates of the disease than pharmaceutical and medical interventions", citing the "dubious benefit of most drugs" for this condition.

"The evidence base for the Mediterranean diet, in preventing all of the chronic diseases that are plaguing the western world is overwhelming," added Dr Aseem Malhotra, a London cardiologist. "This includes cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer".

By contrast, increased animal fat consumption is associated with more Alzheimer's disease. Dietary data analysed from people 65 years and older in Japan and in eight developing countries including India, China, and Brazil have shown that as animal fat and calorie consumption increased, so did obesity (not surprising) and the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease (not so well known). According to this research author, mechanisms for dementia risk include being overweight and an increased intake of saturated fat, cholesterol, and iron.

What to do?

Seven revolutionary tips to improve your brain health – plus a bonus 8th!

These 7 dietary principles promote brain health and can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

1. Minimise your intake of saturated fats and trans fats. Saturated fat is found primarily in dairy products, meats, and certain oils (coconut and palm oils). Trans fats are found in many snack pastries and fried foods and are listed on labels as 'partially hydrogenated oils'.
2. Vegetables, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), fruits, and whole grains should be the primary staples of the diet.
3. One ounce of nuts or seeds (one small handful) daily provides a healthful source of vitamin E. Make sure they are fresh, not rancid.

4. A reliable source of vitamin B12, such as fortified foods or a supplement providing at least the recommended daily allowance (2.4 mcg per day for adults) should be part of your daily diet.
5. When selecting multiple vitamins, choose those without iron and copper, and consume iron supplements only when directed by your physician.
6. While aluminium's role in Alzheimer's disease remains a matter of investigation, it is prudent to avoid the use of cookware, antacids, baking powder, or other products that contribute dietary aluminium.
7. Include aerobic exercise in your routine, equivalent to 40 minutes of brisk walking three times per week.

And for a bonus.....

Number 8 – Reduce, or better still eliminate white sugar from your diet. Why? Because high blood sugar levels are linked to the risk of developing dementia. In a study last year, and after nearly 7 years of follow-up, those with 15 % higher blood sugar levels (an average blood glucose value of 100 mg/dl, compared with 115 mg/dl) recorded a 15% increase risk in dementia. Prior studies show that diabetes is associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease, but this one showed an increased risk of dementia even in people without diabetes.

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