BRAIN HEALTH FOOD GUIDE

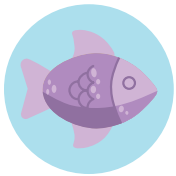
CCNV Consortium canadien en neurodégénérescence associée au vieillissement

CCNA Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging

Eating well for your brain health means:



- Including a **variety** of healthy foods in moderation
- Focusing on overall **pattern** of healthy eating, not one specific "superfood"
- Eating until you're **comfortably full** and not stuffed
- Enjoying lots of **fruits and vegetables** including berries and leafy greens (lettuce, kale, and spinach). Frozen fruits and vegetables are an equally good option



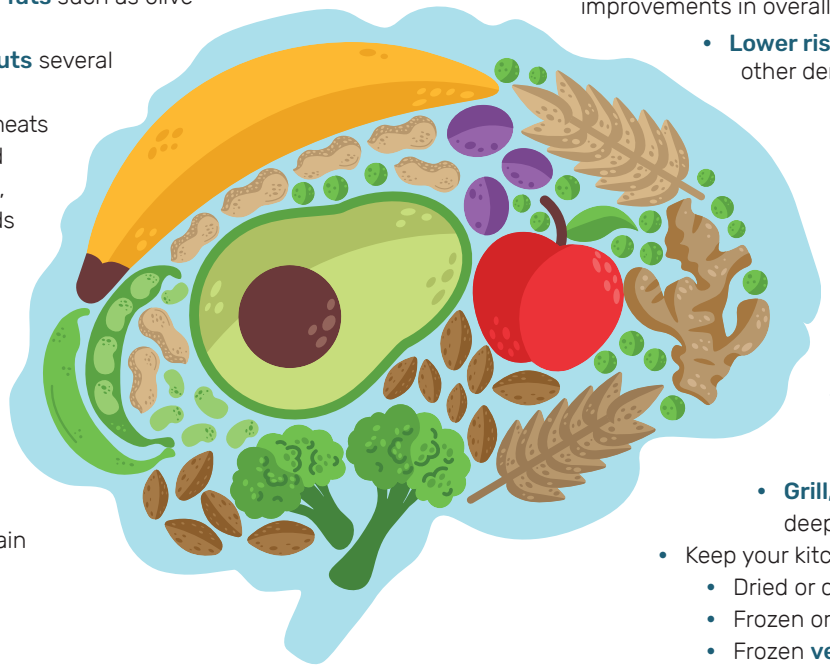
- Including foods with **healthy fats** such as olive oil daily
- Choosing **fish**, **beans**, and **nuts** several times a week
- **Limiting** red and processed meats
- **Limiting** foods high in added sugar and salt such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, fried foods chips, frozen dinners, and canned soups



- Choosing dairy products such as milk and yogurt that are **low in fat.** For example, choose skim milk instead of whole milk



- Selecting **whole grains** over refined grains. For example, choose multigrain bread instead of white bread



For more resources and recipes, to find a registered dietitian, and to share your feedback, scan the QR code

An Evidence-Based Approach to Healthy Eating for the Aging Brain

Simple diet changes have a powerful effect on brain health

What's good for the body is also good for the brain.



The Brain Health Food Guide is similar to the eating plans that are recommended to treat other conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.

Studies show that eating a healthy diet is associated with:

- **Better memory abilities**[1,2], thinking speed[1,3], and improvements in overall brain functioning[4]
- **Lower risk of Alzheimer's disease** and other dementias[5]



Tips & Tricks

The Brain Health Food Guide includes a variety of healthy foods that supply your brain with the nutrients it needs to function best.

- **Choose colour.** Eat a colourful assortment of fruits and vegetables at each meal
- **Grill, steam,** or **bake** foods instead of deep frying



- Keep your kitchen stocked with:
  - Dried or canned **beans**
  - Frozen or canned **fish**
  - Frozen **vegetables** and **fruits**
- Add **beans** or **legumes** to soups, stews, salads, and stir-fries
- **Snack smart.** Choose nuts, fresh fruits, chopped vegetables, and low-fat yogurt



- **Keep hydrated.** Drink water or other unsweetened drinks

The Brain Health Food Guide was developed by **Dr. Matthew Parrott** in collaboration with members of the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging: Team 5 (Nutrition, Exercise and Lifestyle in Alzheimer's Disease Prevention).

Team 5 Member Organizations: Baycrest Health Sciences, Concordia University, Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal, Centre de recherche du Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal, McGill University, Rotman Research Institute, Montreal Heart Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto Rehab/UHN Cardiovascular Rehabilitation Program, Université de Montréal, Université de Sherbrooke, University Health Network, Toronto, University of British Columbia, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, Waterloo University

Supporting evidence: [1] Shannon, OM, Stephan, BCM, Granic, A, et al. Mediterranean diet adherence and cognitive function in older UK adults: The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition-Norfolk (EPIC-Norfolk) Study. Am J Clin Nutr. 2019;110:93943. [2] Valls-Pedret C, Sala-Vila A, Serra-Mir, et al. Mediterranean diet and age-related cognitive decline: a randomized trial. JAMA Internal Medicine. 2015:175(7):1094-1103. [3] Smith PJ, Blumenthal, JA, Babyak MA, et al. Effects of the dietary approaches to stop hypertension diet, exercise, and caloric restriction on neurocognition in overweight adults with high blood pressure. Hypertension. 2010:55:1331-1338. [4] Martinez-Lapiscina, EH, Clavero, P, Toledo, E, et al. Mediterranean diet improves cognition: the PREDIMED-NAVARRA randomized trial. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry. 2013;84:1318-1325. [5] Wu, L, Sun, D. Adherence to Mediterranean diet and risk of developing cognitive disorders: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. Scientific Reports. 2017;7:41317.

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FOODS TO INCLUDE	SERVINGS	SERVING SIZE
Vegetables Total	5 or more times a day	1/2 cup = **1/2 fist** 
Cruciferous Vegetables (such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage, bok choy)	3 times a week	
Consider Including: **Raw Leafy Greens** (such as lettuce, spinach, mixed greens, kale, cabbage)	1 time a day	1 cup = **1 fist** 
Fruit Total	4 or more times a day	1 medium fruit or 1/2 cup = **1/2 fist** 
Consider Including: **Berries** (fresh or frozen)	3 times a week	
Unsalted Nuts or All-natural Nut Butters Total (such as almond butter, peanut butter)	1 time a day	1/4 cup nuts = **1 cupped hand** or 2 tbsp nut butter 
Consider Including: **Walnuts**	4 or more times a week	
Beans or Legumes Total (such as chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, navy beans)	2 or more times a week	1/2 cup = **1/2 fist** 
Fish or Seafood Total (not battered or fried)	3 times a week	3-4oz = **1 palm** 
Consider Including: **Fatty Fish** (such as salmon, trout, sardines)	1 or more times a week	



Choose whole grains (such as oats, brown rice, 100% whole wheat or whole grain breads, quinoa, bulgur, barley, whole grain pasta) instead of refined grains (such as white rice, white pasta, white bread)

Use low-fat milk (skim or 1%), yogurt (0-2%), and cheese (about 22%). Use extra-virgin olive oil as your main culinary oil for cooking, salad dressings, and added to bread and foods

FOODS TO LIMIT	SERVINGS	SERVING SIZE
Any Meat and Poultry Total No more than 1 meal per day should include meat or poultry	1 or less per day	3-4oz = **1 palm** 
Consider Limiting: **Red and Processed Meats** (such as beef, pork, lamb, liver, sausages, hot dogs, jerky, cold cuts, pepperoni)	Less than 1 per week	
Butter, Cream, or High Fat Dairy Spreads (such as sour cream, cream cheese)	Less than 1 per week	1 tsp butter or 1 tbsp cream 
White Breads (such as bread, rolls, bagels, pita, tortilla)	1 or less per week	1 slice bread or 1/2 bagel 
Pre-packaged Foods and Meals (such as canned soup, instant noodles, frozen appetizers, and entrees) **Potato Chips, Fries, Pretzels, or other Salty Snacks or Fried Food** **Store-bought Dairy Desserts** (such as ice cream, frozen yogurt, pudding, custard) **Baked Goods** (especially store-bought ones such as cookies, muffins, scones, croissants, donuts, cakes, pies) **Candy and Chocolate** **Pop, Sweetened Fruit Juice or any other Sugary Drink**	3 or less servings per week in total for all these foods	Serving sizes according to the Nutrition Facts table on the food label



REMEMBER

Trying to change your diet may feel overwhelming. Think of small changes you can make.