

Nutrition to Boost Brain-Power

Karleigh Jurek, MS, RD, LD

Senior Wellness Coordinator

The brain

- Our brain is the most complex organ in the body
 - It is in control of all the body's functions
 - Initiates movement, controls behavior, intelligence, translates sense signals, etc
- There are countless different diseases that affect the brain
 - Stroke
 - Brain aneurysm
 - Dementia
 - Alzheimer's
 - And more
- Just like fueling a car, you want to fuel your mind with good-quality foods to help support your brain



Eating for Your Brain

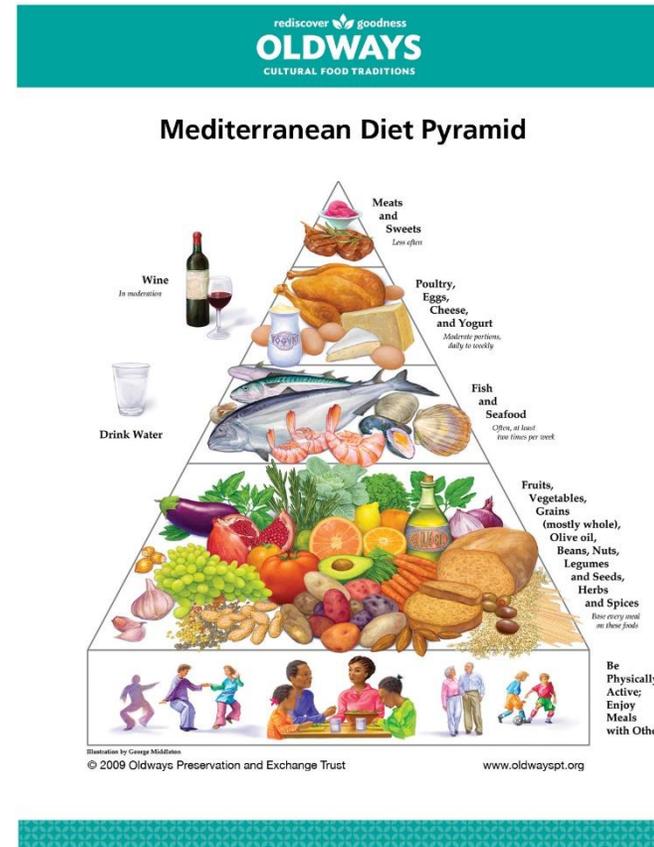
- The National Institutes of Health recommends following a Mediterranean diet pattern for optimum brain functioning¹
 - The study found that those with the highest adherence to the Mediterranean diet had slower cognitive decline
 - Also found that those with the ApoE gene, a gene strongly linked to the development of Alzheimer's disease, who followed the Mediterranean diet had similar cognitive function compared to those with or without the gene
 - The NIH released a statement indicating this diet pattern can help improve cognitive function

**You might see mention of the MIND diet or DASH diet as well

- Keenan TD, Agron E, Mares J, Clemons TE, van Asten F, Swaroop A, and Chew E, for the AREDS and AREDS2 research groups. "Adherence to a Mediterranean diet and cognitive function in the Age-Related Eye Disease Studies 1 & 2." April 14, 2020. Alzheimer's and Dementia.

Eating for Your Brain

- What is the Mediterranean diet?
 - A diet that follows eating patterns traditional to Mediterranean countries, characterized by a high consumption of fruits, vegetables, and olive oil and moderate consumption of protein.
 - Has been researched and found to have a variety of health benefits
 - Consists mostly of:
 - Whole fruits and vegetables
 - Fish
 - Olive oil
 - Nuts
 - Legumes
 - Limited in:
 - Red meat
 - Alcohol



Brain Boosting Foods

- Fatty Fish

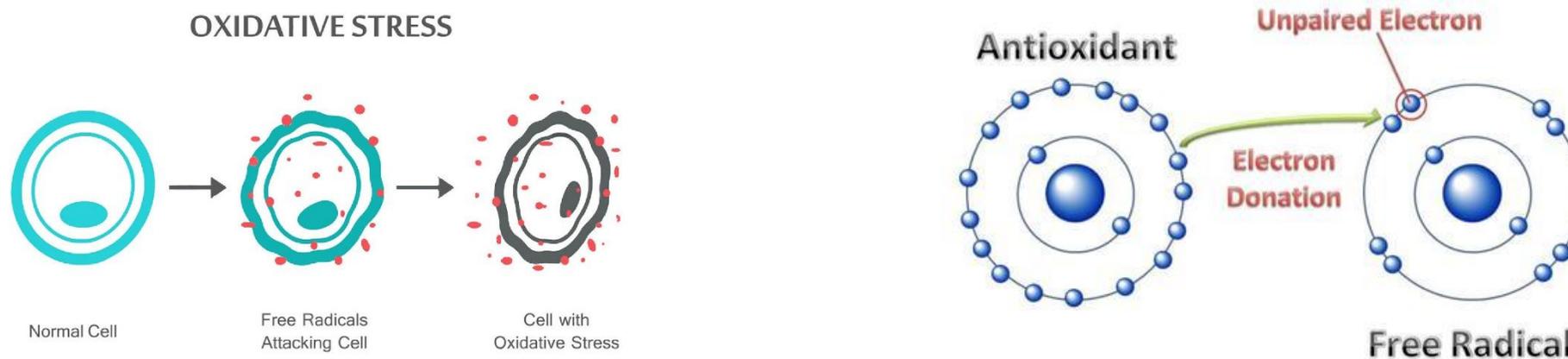
- Fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel, trout are high in omega-3 fatty acids
- 60% of your brain is made of fat and over half is made up of omega-3 fatty acids
- These fats have been found to help build nerve cells and are essential for learning and memory
- Can also improve mood and protect your brain against cognitive decline

- Eggs

- Eggs are a good source of Vitamin B6, B12, Folate and Choline
- Choline is vital for brain development and it has been recommended as an important nutrient for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women
- Choline helps create the neurotransmitter acetylcholine and can help improve mood and memory

Brain Boosting Foods

- Blueberries
 - Packed with the antioxidant anthocyanin and others
 - Antioxidants lower oxidative stress in the body linked to countless chronic diseases
 - Have been linked to better cognitive function and fight depression
 - One study also found blueberries helped improve motor function and reverse short term memory loss



Brain Boosting Foods

- Turmeric
 - A very potent, bright yellow spice that you can find in curry blends or on it's own
 - The active ingredient in turmeric is a compound called curcumin
 - Can pass the blood-brain barrier and directly impact brain cells
 - A powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory with countless benefits
 - Studies have found curcumin can help improve memory in patients with Alzheimer's and help remove amyloid plaque
 - Amyloid plaque is a common build up in patients with Alzheimer's
 - Curcumin has also been identified in helping build new brain cells



Brain Boosting Foods

- Dark Chocolate
 - Packed with flavonoids, a powerful antioxidant found in cocoa
 - Preliminary studies have found those who enjoy dark chocolate regularly have improved memory, brain function, and more
 - Look for chocolate that is at least 70% cocoa



Brain Boosting Foods

- Additional foods that have been identified as good for your brain:
 - Pumpkin seeds
 - Nuts
 - Broccoli
 - Coffee and teas
 - Oranges
 - Green tea

Conclusion

- A well balanced diet can help protect you from chronic diseases, including those associated to your brain
- The Mediterranean diet is considered one of the best diets and has been found to have important benefits for your brain
- There are also specific foods that have been linked to helping maintain good brain health

Questions?

Email: karleigh.Jurek@compass-usa.com