



Keep physically active.

Exercise, like walking 30 minutes a day, can benefit the brain as well as the body. Activity keeps arteries fit and can promote healthy blood flow to the brain. It may even cause the release of nerve growth factors that create new connections in the brain. Exercise also helps by regulating blood sugar, which plays a role in brain health.



Keep mentally active.

Reading, doing crossword puzzles, using a computer and going to lectures can challenge your brain.

Concentrate on what you want to remember, make lists, organize things and plan ahead.

Scientific studies in the field of aging are finding that what you do and what you eat affects how your brain ages. Researchers at John Hopkins University School of Medicine and Harvard Medical School studied 1200 people between 70 and 80 years of age who were performing in the top third of the population for this age group. After ten years, those who preserved their mental functioning were:

- More physically active
- More mentally active
- Continued to maintain a sense of control over their lives, felt that they were contributing to their family or to society, and generally felt good about themselves.

How does what you eat help your brain and memory?

- Fruits and vegetables containing antioxidants, potent chemicals in plants, may provide multiple benefits for the aging brain.

Antioxidants:

- Slow oxidation, by protecting against free radicals, highly active molecules that damage cells
- Act as anti-inflammatory agents, making the brain less vulnerable to amyloid plaque – an abnormal cluster of dead or dying nerve cells.
- Improve communication between neurons in the brain
- Allow the brain to regenerate tissue

— all of which contribute to better memory in old age.

Purple, blue and red fruits, such as blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, plums, red apples and Concord grapes, may be especially beneficial for the brain.

Vegetables high in antioxidants are avocados, kale, spinach, brussel sprouts, broccoli, beets, red bell peppers, and onions.



Can supplements provide the same benefits?

Getting antioxidants from food is more effective and safer than taking supplements. Antioxidants in food may act in combination with one another and protect against different kinds of damage.

There may also be additional but as yet undiscovered substances in plants that work with antioxidants to provide the protective effects.



Avoiding saturated fats and trans fats may also help prevent age-related memory loss. When it comes to the amount of fat in the diet, what's good for the heart is good for the brain. Reducing levels of saturated fat and cholesterol can protect arteries from atherosclerosis and may also help protect brain cells.

Omega-3 fatty acid found in cold-water fatty fish, such as salmon, trout, herring, sardines, mackerel and light tuna is a type of fat that is good for your brain. Eating cold water fatty fish two to three times a week is a good way to get omega-3 fatty acids.

B vitamins, such as niacin and folic acid, are important to brain function and may help keep the mind sharp. Foods that provide B vitamins include lean meats, fish, legumes, nuts and seeds, dairy products, grains and green, leafy vegetables. B vitamins appear to help control inflammation and may play a role in the development of new brain cells.

Talk with your doctor about vitamins B₁₂ and thiamin.

As people get older, their stomachs may no longer produce the substance that promotes the absorption of vitamin B₁₂. Without the substance, even if you take a vitamin B₁₂ pill or food enriched with vitamin B₁₂, the vitamin will pass right through your system. If your stomach cannot produce the absorption factor, you may need to take B₁₂ by injection. Vitamin B₁₂ plays an important role in the brain. A deficiency in vitamin B₁₂ may cause problems in both thinking and walking.

If you drink alcohol and are not eating a well balanced diet you may have a deficiency in thiamin. Deficiency symptoms – confusion, memory problems and difficulty walking – may come on gradually. The condition is treatable by eliminating alcohol and eating a well balanced diet.



Amount of Omega-3s in Fish

A 3-ounce cooked serving (not quite one-fifth of a pound, and roughly the size of a pack of cards) supplies:

Source	Amount of Ω -3 Fatty Acid
bass, striped	800 mg
catfish	200 mg
clams	200 mg
cod, Atlantic	100 mg
cod, Pacific	200 mg
crab, Alaska king	400 mg
crab, Dungeness	300 mg
flounder	400 mg
haddock	200 mg
halibut	400 mg
herring, kippered	1800 mg
herring, pickled	1200 mg
lobster	100 mg
mackerel, Atlantic	1000 mg
mackerel, Jack	1600 mg
mackerel, King	300 mg
mackerel, Pacific	1600 mg
oysters, Eastern (farmed)	400 mg
oysters, Eastern (wild)	500 mg
oysters, Pacific (raw)	600 mg
perch, Atlantic	300 mg
pollock, Atlantic	500 mg

Source	Amount of Ω -3 Fatty Acid
pollock, Walleye	400 mg
rockfish	400 mg
salmon, Atlantic (farmed)	1800 mg
salmon, Atlantic (wild)	1600 mg
salmon, Coho (farmed)	1100 mg
salmon, Coho (wild)	900 mg
salmon, Sockeye (canned)	1000 mg
sardines (Atlantic)	800 mg
sardines (Pacific)	1400 mg
scallops	200 mg
shrimp	300 mg
sole	400 mg
swordfish	700 mg
tilefish	800 mg
trout, mixed species	800 mg
trout, Rainbow (farmed)	1000 mg
trout, Rainbow (wild)	800 mg
tuna, Bluefin	1300 mg
tuna, light, canned	200 mg
tuna, Skipjack	300 mg
tuna, Yellowfin	200 mg
tuna, white, canned	700 mg
whiting	400 mg



Ingredients

- 1 cup dried apricots, chopped
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup macadamia nuts
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sunflower seeds
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole grain cereal
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Omega Trail Mix Recipe

Makes 8 Servings

Directions

1. Add apricots, cranberries, walnuts, macadamia nuts, seeds, and cereal in a large bowl and mix until well combined.
2. Sprinkle in the cinnamon and continue to stir, until thoroughly blended.
3. Serve immediately or cover with a lid and store in a dry setting until service time.