



Alzheimer Society

ONTARIO

Eating Healthy and Alzheimer's disease

WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HEART IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEAD

Taking care of your brain begins with taking care of your heart. Several conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol — also increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Your brain is one of the most active organs in your body. Your heart pumps about 20 percent of your blood to your brain, where billions of cells use the blood's oxygen and fuel. If your heart isn't pumping well, or if your brain's blood vessels are damaged, your brain cells have trouble getting all the food and oxygen they need.

Take brain health to heart:

- Adopt a long-term, heart-healthy diet and eat in moderation. A healthy diet helps your brain function at its best and can slow down memory loss. Individuals who are obese or who have a high cholesterol and high blood pressure have a higher risk of dementia.
- Reduce your intake of fat and cholesterol. Studies have shown that high intake of saturated fat and cholesterol clogs the arteries and is associated with higher risk for Alzheimer's disease.
- Exercise for 30 minutes each day. Walking or other types of exercise gets the body moving and the heart pumping.
- Avoid smoking. Smoking interferes with blood flow and oxygen to the brain and is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

What kinds of food should I be eating?

A Mediterranean diet is your best bet. Studies have shown it may lower the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. How do I follow a Mediterranean diet?

Eat more:

- Fruits like blueberries and raspberries
- Dark leafy vegetables
- Olive oil
- Whole grains
- Fish and seafood
- Herbs and spices
- Beans and legumes
- Unsalted nuts



Eat less:

- Sugar
- Dairy
- Processed grains
- Red meat
- Salt
- Cooked vegetables
- Saturated fatty acids

How does a Mediterranean diet help my brain?

- Olive oil, fish and nuts contain healthy fats that are good for your heart and brain.
- Dark leafy vegetables and fruits like blueberries and raspberries contain antioxidants, which have been proven when coupled with exercise to reduce your risk of getting Alzheimer's disease.
- Fruits and vegetables also have vitamin C, which reduces oxidative stress in the brain.
- Whole grains, fruits and beans contain folate. Low levels of the nutrient have been linked to Alzheimer's disease.

Following a heart healthy diet reduces these risk factors:

- Strokes and ministrokes, which can damage brain tissue.
- High cholesterol, which increases levels of amyloid-beta plaques in the brain.
- Diabetes, which impacts the brain's ability to absorb simple sugars.
- High saturated fat intake, which damages the brain's blood lining and allow amyloid-beta from the small intestines to enter the brain.
- Vitamin deficiencies, which increase amyloid-beta levels.

What is amyloid-beta?

Amyloid-beta is a protein present in normal brains. Abnormal accumulation and clumping together of amyloid-beta proteins are toxic to brain cells and result in Alzheimer's disease.

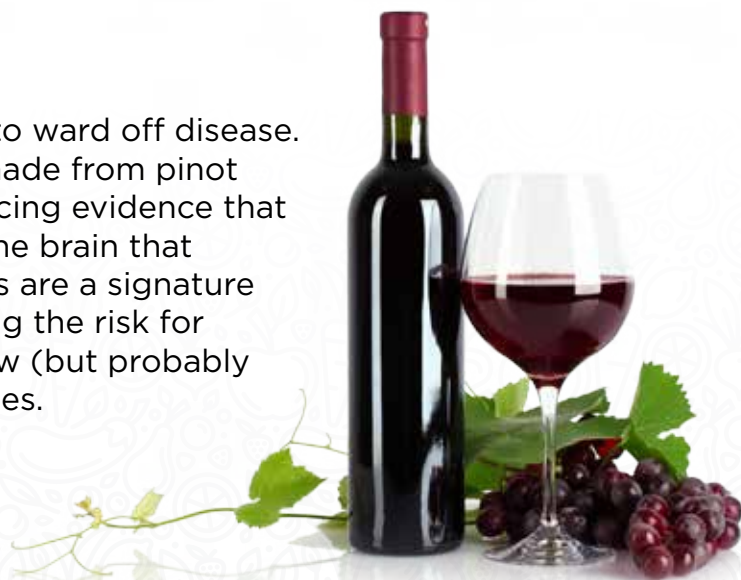
Tips and Tricks to a healthier diet

Here are a few simple tricks to get more of these foods into your diet on a regular basis:

- Cooking with ground beef? Instead, make your burgers, chili or tomato sauce with ground turkey.
- Is your lettuce more white than green? Switch out your iceberg for romaine and spinach. And to make your salads even healthier, consider sprinkling chopped walnuts too.
- Buttering your bread? Instead, dip it in olive oil (extra virgin is the best). Add vinaigrette for more flavour.
- Skip the orange juice with breakfast and replace with some berries on the side.
- Avoid the frying pan. Keep your vegetables raw for more brain-boosting vitamins.
- Spare the salt. For extra flavour, add herbs and spices instead.
- Switch to almond or soy milk for less saturated fat and more nutrients.
- Avoid processed grains and stick to whole-wheat.
- Keep alcohol consumption in check—no more than a couple of drinks per day.

Pour a glass of Pinot Noir

Resveratrol is a compound produced by plants to ward off disease. The wines with the most resveratrol are those made from pinot noir grapes. One recent study presented convincing evidence that resveratrol prevents the build up of plaques in the brain that snarl intercellular communication. These plaques are a signature of Alzheimer's disease. So in addition to reducing the risk for cancer and heart disease, red wine may also slow (but probably not prevent) the degeneration of neural processes. To your health!



Food Journal

Date: _____

Writing down what you eat each day helps you take a critical look at your food habits and make healthy changes. Food diaries can also help identify areas where you can make changes to improve your health.

My personal goal is: _____

TIME/ MEAL	FOOD/BEVERAGE (TYPE AND AMOUNT)	CALORIES	NOTES (Ex. Describe how you felt while you ate, both mental and physical)
BREAKFAST			
SNACK			
LUNCH			
SNACK			
DINNER			
SNACK			
TOTAL CALORIES			

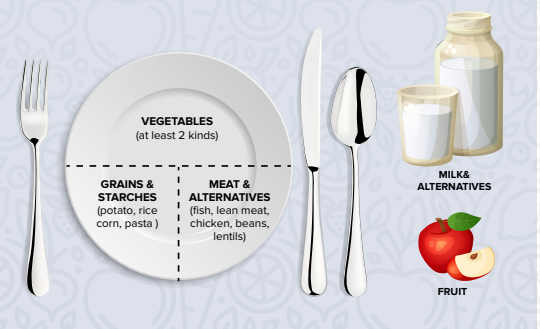
Try to make sure that every day you are getting at least:

- 7-10 servings of fruits and vegetables.
- 6-8 servings of grain products including whole-grain cereal, rice, pasta or bread.
- 2 servings of milk, milk alternatives, yogurt, or cheese.
- 2-3 servings of meat and meat alternatives, including lean meat, poultry, or fish.

This information is taken from Health Canada's Food Guide. Your specific needs for a healthy diet may vary. A registered dietitian can help you include your favourite foods in a personalized meal plan.

Plan for healthy eating

Using a standard dinner plate, follow the Plate Method in the image below to control your portion sizes.



Source: Diabetes Canada

Brain Healthy Recipe Cards



White Fish with Roasted Garlic & Lentil Mash

INGREDIENTS

- 2 heads of garlic
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) fresh ground pepper
- canola oil cooking spray
- 2 cups (500 mL) cooked or canned green lentils
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp (10 mL) chopped fresh thyme
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 white fish fillets (about 1 lb./500 g)
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) curry powder
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F (200 °C).
2. Cut stem off garlic heads to expose cloves. Wrap with foil and roast for about 1 hour until very soft. Let cool slightly. Squeeze out garlic cloves from each head and mash in canola oil with fork. Stir in parsley and pepper; set aside. To prepare lentil mash: spray non-stick skillet with canola oil cooking spray and over medium heat, add lentils, tomatoes, garlic and thyme. Cook for 5 minutes; mash slightly. Stir in broth and keep warm.
3. Spray fish fillets with canola oil cooking spray and sprinkle with curry powder and parsley. Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C). In non-stick, ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, sear fish on both sides. Spread roasted garlic mixture on top of fillets and place in oven for about 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested. Spoon lentil mixture into shallow bowl and top with fish fillets.



Black Bean and Edamame Avocado Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 of a 15 oz (425 g) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup (250 mL) fresh or frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1 medium yellow squash, diced
- 1 medium celery stalk, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) lime juice
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 ripe medium avocado, peeled, seeded and chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

In a medium bowl, combine black beans, edamame, squash, celery, lime juice, canola oil, rosemary, salt and black pepper. Toss gently, yet thoroughly until well coated. Just before serving add the avocado and toss gently.