

4 Types of Foods to Support Memory

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If you're feeling forgetful, it could be due to a lack of sleep or a number of other reasons, including genetics, level of physical activity and lifestyle and environmental factors. However, there's no doubt that diet also plays a role in brain health.

The best menu for supporting memory and brain function encourages good blood flow to the brain — much like what you'd eat to nourish and protect your heart. Research is finding the Mediterranean Diet may help keep aging brains sharp, and a growing body of evidence links foods such as those in the Mediterranean diet with better cognitive function, memory and alertness.

Eat your veggies. You're not likely to forget this message. Getting adequate vegetables, especially cruciferous ones including broccoli, cabbage and dark leafy greens, may help improve memory. Try a kale salad or substitute collard greens for a tortilla in your next sandwich wrap. Broccoli stir-fry also is an excellent option for lunch or dinner.

Be sweet on berries and cherries. Berries — especially dark ones such as blackberries, blueberries and cherries — are a rich source of anthocyanins and other flavonoids that may support memory function. Enjoy a handful of berries for a snack, mixed into cereal or baked into an antioxidant-rich dessert. You can reap these benefits from fresh, frozen or dried berries and cherries.

Get adequate omega-3 fatty acids. Essential for good brain health, omega-3 fatty acids, docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA, in particular, may help improve memory. Seafood, algae and fatty fish — including salmon, bluefin tuna, sardines and herring — are some of the best sources of the omega-3 fatty acid, DHA. Substitute fish for other meats once or twice a week to get a healthy dose. Grill, bake or broil fish for ultimate flavor and nutrition. Try salmon tacos with red cabbage slaw, snack on sardines or enjoy seared tuna on salad greens for dinner. If you don't eat fish, discuss other food options or supplementation with your doctor or registered dietitian nutritionist. You can get DHA omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil, seaweed or microalgae supplements.

Work in walnuts. Well known for a positive impact on heart health, walnuts also may improve cognitive function. Snack on a handful of walnuts to satisfy midday hunger, add them to oatmeal or a salad for crunch or mix them into a vegetable stir-fry for extra protein.

While there's no guarantee that these foods will help you remember where you put your keys tomorrow, over time they can support lifelong good health.

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