

## **Alzheimer's Disease and Nutrition**

A progressive condition, Alzheimer's disease damages areas of the brain involved in memory, intelligence, judgment, language and behavior. It is the most common form of mental decline in older adults and is usually diagnosed by age 70 or older. For four million Americans, the disease affects not only memory, but behavior, personality, the ability to think and the ability to function day-to-day. At this time there is no known cure.

While there is no special diet required for people with Alzheimer's disease -- unless they have another condition, such as diabetes, that requires a particular diet -- eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet is extremely beneficial. With the proper diet, our bodies work more efficiently and have more energy.

### **The Nutrition Basics**

Let's talk about the basics:

- Eat a variety of foods from each food group.
- Include antioxidant-rich foods, such as dark and vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables.
- Consume heart-healthy omega fats from fish, as well as nuts, seeds and grains.
- Maintain body weight through a proper balance of exercise and nutrition.
- Choose foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Try to limit simple sugars.
- Moderate use of salt.
- Drink eight 8 oz. glasses of water per day (unless you are on a fluid-restricted regimen, due to another medical condition, such as congestive heart failure).

If you have questions about creating an appropriate diet plan, please reach out to the dietary and medical experts at Service Foods. We have a variety of tools to help you plan your meals, including informational blogs and a fact-based website.

### **Antioxidants**

Research has shown that consuming a diet rich in antioxidants may help decrease one's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Of these antioxidant vitamins, vitamin E and vitamin C have proven to be most influential.

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin found primarily in vegetable and nut oils, as well as in spinach and whole grain products. Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin most commonly found in citrus fruits, such as oranges and grapefruit, as well as in tomatoes, spinach and red peppers. For maximum prevention, it is recommended that these vitamins be provided by actual foods in the diet, rather than nutritional supplements.

#### **Foods High In Vitamin E**

Vegetable oil

#### **Foods High In Vitamin C**

Broccoli

Oranges

Corn Oil  
Spinach  
Wheat germ  
Soybean oil  
Safflower oil  
Whole grains  
Sunflower seeds

Kiwifruit  
Pineapple  
Grapefruit  
Asparagus  
Collars  
Mango

Peppers  
Strawberries  
Avocados  
Lemons  
Onions  
Cantaloupe

### **Fat and Cholesterol**

Consuming a diet lower in cholesterol is also thought to be beneficial in Alzheimer's prevention. Cholesterol comes from animal products, such as eggs, meat, poultry, fish and dairy products. The American Heart Association recommends consuming no more than 300 mg of cholesterol per day for good health.

Because high fat diets are thought to impair learning and memory performance, elevated blood cholesterol may be related to the development of Alzheimer's disease. High levels of cholesterol in the blood or a diet high in saturated fat can triple a person's risk for developing this disease.

### **Maintaining a Healthy Brain**

Dr. Perlmutter, a board-certified neurologist with over 30 years of experience studying neuroscience, says the most important way to keep the brain functioning at its peak is through nutrition. "It's as simple as that," says Dr. Perlmutter. "Nutrition is THE most important tool for staying mentally and physically fit, but it's the most underutilized tool." The most important nutrient for the brain is fat, because the brain is made of fat. The problem is that if we feed it unhealthy fats, we wind up with an unhealthy brain. Monounsaturated fats like olive oil are naturally high in antioxidants and, when incorporated in the brain, are less vulnerable to damage done by free radicals. The best fat for the brain is omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in cold water, fatty fish, deep green leafy vegetables, and some grains and seeds. Other sources of essential fatty acids are omega 6 fatty acids found in cooking oils, nuts, seeds, and cereals.

### **Avoiding Processed Foods**

Highly processed and chemically laden foods invite harmful free radicals to invade our brains. The first step to a healthy brain is getting rid of processed/sugary and starchy junk foods. Replace them with real food, such as unprocessed, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Eliminate the unnecessary sugary sodas and snack foods. Buy organic or all-natural produce and meats that are free of chemical pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics. All of these changes can add up to significant health benefits. Service Foods is the leader in providing all-natural meats, seafood and produce, free of hormones, additives and extra salt. Keep your health at the forefront when you're selecting foods for your whole family to enjoy!