

The “MIND” Diet May Help Prevent Alzheimer’s

Want another great reason to eat healthy? The food choices you make daily might lower your odds of getting Alzheimer’s disease, some scientists say. Researchers have found that people who stuck to a diet that included foods like berries, leafy [greens](#), and [fish](#) had a major drop in their risk for the memory-sapping disorder, which affects more than 5 million Americans over age 65.

Healthy Brain-Friendly Foods

This eating plan is called the “**MIND**” diet which stands for **M**editerranean-**D**A**S**H **I**ntervention for **N**eurodegenerative **D**elay. It’s similar to two other healthy meal plans: [the DASH diet](#) and the [Mediterranean diet](#).

But the MIND approach “specifically includes plant-based foods and nutrients that medical literature and data show to be good for the brain, such as berries,” says Martha Clare Morris, ScD, director of nutrition and nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center.

You need to eat foods from the following food groups:

- Multiple colorful organic vegetables: At least ten to fifteen servings a week
- Unsalted organic nuts and seeds: Five servings a week
- Organic fruits especially berries: Two or more servings a week
- Beans: At least three servings a week
- [Whole grains](#): Three or more servings a day
- Wild caught fish: Once a week
- Free range poultry (like chicken or turkey): Two times a week
- Extra virgin olive or coconut oil: Use them as your main cooking oils.
- Avocados instead of butter and margarine
- Fresh organic herbs and spices
- Wine: No more than one glass a week or less
- Purified water: Half your body weight in ozs a day.

You need to avoid foods from the following food groups:

- Red meat: Less than one serving a week
- Butter and margarine: Less than a tablespoon daily
- Cheese: Less than one serving a week
- Pastries and sweets: Less than one serving a week
- Fried or fast food: Less than one serving a week
- Processed or packaged foods: Less than one serving a week

The Benefits

One study showed that people who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk of Alzheimer's disease by 54%. That's big. But maybe even more importantly, researchers found that adults who followed the diet only part of the time still cut their risk of the disease by about 35%.

On the other hand, people who followed the DASH and Mediterranean diets "moderately" had almost no drop in their Alzheimer's risk, Morris says. Scientists need to do more research on the MIND approach, "but it's a very promising start. It shows that what you eat *can* make an impact on whether you develop late-onset Alzheimer's," which is the most common form of the disease, says Cecilia Rokusek, a registered dietitian at Nova Southeastern University.

Should You Follow the MIND Diet?

Even if you don't have a family history of Alzheimer's disease or other risk factors, you may still want to try this eating plan. It focuses on nutritious [whole foods](#), so "it's not just good for your brain. It's good for your heart and overall health, too," says Majid Fotuhi, MD, PhD. He is the chairman and CEO of the Memosyn Neurology Institute.

One of the best things about the plan is that you don't have to stick to it perfectly to see benefits, Rokusek says. "That makes it more likely you'll follow it for a long time," she says. And the longer people eat the MIND way, the lower their risk of getting Alzheimer's disease, Morris says. If you do decide to make your diet more MIND-like, Rokusek recommends you take a few extra steps. "Keep your portions in check, and be careful about how food is prepared. Sauces, breading, and oils can add extra calories and hidden ingredients like [sugar](#)," she says. "Make a point to drink several glasses of water a day, too."

Last, understand that even though diet plays a big role, "it's only one aspect of Alzheimer's disease," Fotuhi says. So get regular [exercise](#) every day as part of a healthy lifestyle and manage your [stress](#) to lower your risk even more, he says.

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10 Early Signs of Alzheimer's

<https://www.webmd.com/alzheimers/guide/early-warning-signs-when-to-call-the-doctor-about-alzheimers#1>
