

# Best foods for brain health

Sunrise Senior Living

There are a number of factors that contribute to brain health.

Lifestyle factors, like how often you challenge your mental and physical well-being and how much sleep you get at night, impact your mind. But that's not all - according to Eat Right, an initiative by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, your diet also affects the way your brain works.

Eating for mental wellness is a crucial part of healthy aging. Here are a few of the best foods for fueling your brain and boosting your memory and cognitive function:

## 1. Dark, leafy greens

You know that eating an abundance of dark, leafy vegetables contributes to your digestive health and physical figure. But did you know the influence they have on the brain? According to a study by Rush University Medical Center, following the MIND diet - which consists mostly of leafy greens - can slow cognitive decline in aging adults with Alzheimer's and can even reduce one's chance of developing the disease at all. Consider eating more kale salads, or add a side of spinach to your meals throughout the week.

## 2. Berries

According to Eat Right, blackberries, blueberries and cherries are rich in anthocyanins and ed brain function and memory. Start your day off the right way with a bowl of berrflavonoids that contribute to increasies for breakfast, or try one of our delicious smoothie recipes. Blueberries are loaded with antioxidants that fuel a health mind.

## 3. Fatty fish

Omega-3 fatty acids, especially docosahexaenoic acid - DHA - make a positive impact on the brain when consumed. Andrea Diancoli, RD, registered dietitian and past spokesperson of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics said that DHA in particular can improve memory.

"DHA is the most abundant fatty acid in the brain," she told Eat Right. "It makes sense that if you have higher levels of DHA in the blood, then the brain will operate more efficiently."

Salmon, bluefin tuna, sardines and herring are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Try one of our healthy salmon fillet recipes for a family get-together.

## 4. Walnuts

Much like fatty fish, walnuts are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids. But they're also full of B vitamins, vitamin E and essential amino acids that protect the brain and keep the mind sharp, according to wellness coach Ann Kulze, M.D.:

"Walnuts also offer a hefty dose of omega-3 fats along with especially potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant plant compounds called polyphenols," she told Men's Fitness. "For many reasons, the brain is

The next time you're considering a snack, reach for a handful of walnuts or chop them up and throw them in a cup of Greek yogurt.