

Care About Carotene

Another supplement to consider is beta-carotene — the pigment that makes carrots orange. As part of the landmark Physician's Health Study, researchers at Harvard University examined different aspects of health for 4,000 people over a period of about 18 years.

The study showed that people 65 and older who had taken beta-carotene for the entire length of the 18-year study scored significantly higher in tests for general cognition and verbal memory than a group who received only placebo (*Arch Intern Med* 2007;167:2184-90).

Focus on Fish

Some ancient societies were convinced that eating fish boosts brain power. While this sounds like an old wives' tale, science is proving this concept to be accurate: More and more studies point to fish consumption as a key component of cognitive fitness.

Many types of fish contain large amounts of important fats known as omega-3 fatty acids. Scores of reports show that omega-3s can maintain brain health effectively, and even prevent dementia.

A new French study looked at more than 8,000 older people, adjusting the group for other dementia-influencing factors, and found that people who ate fish weekly reduced their risk of AD by as much as 35 percent. The study also found that the risk of developing dementia is raised by 50 percent if you don't eat fish or take fish oil (*Neurology* 2007;69:1921-30).

An earlier study had already determined that daily consumption of about 1 gram of a fish oil supplement is associated with a 50 percent reduction in dementia (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2006;83:1494S-1498S).

Most scientists now accept that omega-3 fatty acids are involved in the prevention of dementia, along with many other diseases and disorders (*J*

Nutri Health Aging 2006;10:386-99).

We should be adding omega-3s to our diet in some form, perhaps as part of a healthy diet, which includes regular servings of fish (*Arch Gerontol Geriatr* 2007;44 Suppl 1:143-53).

One note of caution: Due to water pollution, many fish contain high levels of toxins and heavy metals, such as mercury and PCBs, which affect brain health. Larger, longer-lived species are most susceptible to contamination. Whenever possible, avoid swordfish, tilefish, shark, snapper and king mackerel, all of which are known to have high levels of mercury.

Grab the Garlic

Garlic is another traditional ingredient taken for cognitive health. One animal study found that consumption of garlic, specifically aged garlic extract (AGE), actually stopped deterioration in the brain's hippocampus, the area which plays a key role in memory function. Researchers also concluded that AGE has the potential to prevent the progression of Alzheimer's disease (*Phytother Res* 2007;21:629-40).

And, researchers at Tufts University School of Medicine determined that AGE seems to offer neuronal protection, which can improve learning and memory retention. They conclude that AGE actually prevents cerebrovascular disease and lowers the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease (*J Nutri* 2006;136:810S-812S).

Consider a Cocktail

One of the most intriguing suggestions for keeping dementia at bay is alcohol consumption. While chronic alcohol abuse is linked to the development of dementia, one or two glasses per day may bolster brain health.

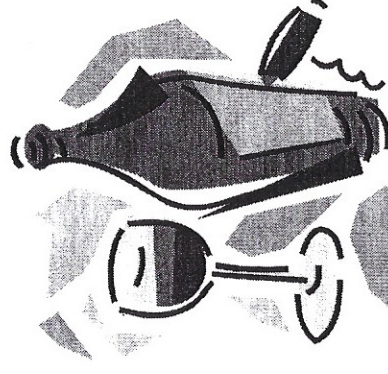
French researchers found that light or moderate alcohol intake, between one and three drinks per day, may significantly cut the risk of dementia. The same study also showed a decreased danger of stroke, which is itself a major risk for vascular dementia (*Biol Res* 2004;37:189-93).

Eat an Apple a Day

If you don't like to drink alcohol, you could substitute apple juice. An animal research project at the University of Massachusetts used apple juice concentrate to show that antioxidant-rich foods, such as apples, can prevent decline in cognitive performance related to aging and dietary deficiencies (*J Alzheimers Dis* 2006;287-91).

Have a Coffee Break

Your favorite cup of joe may prevent dementia, too. Specifically, one animal study determined that drinking a moderate amount of coffee — about five cups per day — may delay or reduce the risk of developing AD (*Neuroscience* 2006;142:941-52).



Putting it all Together

This chiropractic office is committed to helping patients achieve overall wellness. That's why we focus on teaching patients about nutrition and disease prevention. If you're interested in learning more about how specific foods and nutrients fight disease, ask us about additional educational materials and learning opportunities.

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