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Community Dining
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Feeding Your Brain

While Alzheimer's is the most common cause for dementia, affecting more than 6 million Americans aged 65 or older, there are many other causes. Parkinson's disease, alcoholism, stroke, multiple sclerosis, ALS, and traumatic brain injuries can cause dementia as well. Other conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease can increase your risk of dementia.



It is important to make conscious, healthful decisions to minimize the risk of developing dementia. These choices include regular physical activity, socializing with peers, limiting alcohol intake and quitting smoking. Following healthy eating patterns like the MIND and the Mediterranean diet can be beneficial for brain health because they are high in certain nutrients that improve cognitive functioning. These nutrients include:

Omega-3 fatty acids- research suggests diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids, combined with low saturated fat intake, may lower the risk of cognitive decline. Sources include; salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts.

B Vitamins- specifically B6, B12 and folate. These vitamins help metabolize amino acids that are risk factors for dementia. Deficiencies can negatively impact mental health and cause cognitive decline. Sources of B vitamins include; animal proteins (chicken, beef, pork), beans, bananas, fortified cereals, and dairy.

Antioxidants and Phytonutrients-antioxidants help fight free radicals, which attack healthy cells. These can minimize damage caused by chronic stress and free radicals. Phytonutrients, which give certain fruits and vegetables their rich colors, have positive effects on the brain. To increase your intake of phytonutrients and antioxidants eat a wide range of fruits and vegetables; eat the rainbow!

Vitamin D- this vitamin is believed to have protective effects against cognitive decline. Research has suggests low blood levels of Vitamin D may affect brain health. Sources of Vitamin D include fortified milk, yogurt, fortified plant-based milks, fortified orange juice, salmon, canned tuna, sardines, and mushrooms.

Choline- this nutrient is necessary for normal brain and nervous system function, muscle function and other bodily functions. Sources of choline include; beef,

chicken, egg yolks, beans and peas, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and dairy.

For more information regarding how to improve your nutrition status and how to follow a healthy, balanced diet reach out to a registered dietitian!

Creamy Broccoli Soup Recipe

Ready in about 30 minutes!

Ingredients

Soup:

1 tablespoon *olive oil*
 2 *cloves garlic*, minced
 1 *yellow onion*, chopped
 8 cups chopped *broccoli* (1½ to 2 pounds)
 4 cups *water*
 1 can (15 ounces) *white beans*, rinsed and drained
 Salt and pepper, to taste



Toppings:

3 tablespoons *lemon juice*
 1 cup *low-fat plain Greek yogurt*
 ¼ cup chopped *fresh chives*
 Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

Before you begin: Wash your hands.

1. In soup pot, sauté oil, garlic, onion and broccoli about 10 minutes, until tender.
2. Add in water and beans. With hand blender, puree half of the soup. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. (For those without a hand blender, allow soup to cool for 20 minutes and add to a regular blender, blend, then add back to pot and simmer for 10 minutes).
3. Mix lemon juice, yogurt, chives, salt and pepper. Drizzle on top of warm soup, and serve.

Nutritional Information

Serving size: 1½ cups
 Serves 6

Source: <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthful-habits/feeding-your-body-feeding-your-brain>

<https://www.eatright.org/recipes/soups-and-stews/creamy-broccoli-soup-recipe>