



Brain Food Boosts Mind Power

If your diet does not include the right vitamins and nutrients, your brain health might be at risk.

Your brain needs omega-3 fatty acids to for best health. Omega-3s are found in flax meal, canola oil, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, tofu, soy products, and fish. Studies show that low levels of omega-3s may be linked to memory problems and Alzheimer's disease.

In one study, researchers looked at the healthy brains of 1,575 people. Each person performed a memory test. They also provided a blood sample to measure levels of omega-3s. Those with higher levels scored

better on memory tests.

Another study found that fish-eaters had healthier brains and were less likely to develop Alzheimer's.

If you want to keep your brain healthy, eat foods with omega-3 fatty acids. The Institutes of Medicine recommends adults get about 1-1.6 grams of omega-3 fatty acids per day. (A 1-ounce handful of walnuts contains 2.6 grams of omega-3 fatty acids. And a tablespoon of ground flax meal contains 1.8 grams of omega-3 fatty acids.)



Plant-based sources for omega-3 fatty acids include nuts, seeds, and soy products. Fish is also a good source for omega-3s.

Keeping your mind healthy is not the only benefit. Omega-3 fatty acids also reduce the risk for heart disease, cancer, and arthritis.

*American Academy of Neurology.
Radiological Society of North America.
American Heart Association.
Institutes of Medicine.*

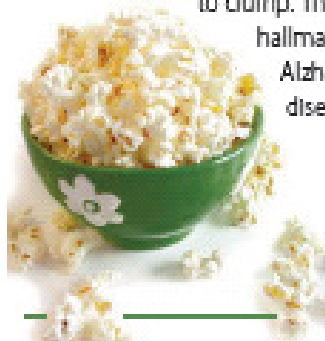
Foods sources for omega-3 fatty acids
<http://tinyurl.com/5owem2>

Be Picky About Your Popcorn

You can buy a bucket of popcorn at the movies for a hefty price. And if you're so inclined, you can slather on the butter flavoring. But a new study suggests that butter flavoring may be more costly than what you'll pay at the movies.

Researchers found a link between an ingredient used in butter flavoring called, *diacetyl*, and Alzheimer's disease. The progressive brain disease slowly destroys memory and thinking skills. About 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. And there is no cure.

In rat studies, researchers found that diacetyl caused proteins in the brain to clump. This is a hallmark sign of Alzheimer's disease.



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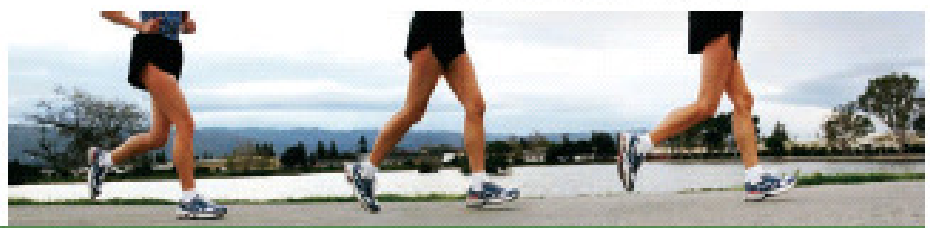
Follow the Crowd to Better Health

In May 1977, former U.S. Olympic marathon runner Don Kardong organized a small road race in Spokane, Wash. A few diehard runners showed up the first year. But that changed dramatically when Kardong encouraged everyone to get involved and be more active. More than a million runners, walkers, joggers, kids, and people in wheelchairs have completed the course since then. Even a 105-year-old woman has walked her way to the finish line. Today, The Lilac Bloomsday Run is the largest road race in the United States. On May 5 an estimated 53,000 people will complete the 7-mile course. And for many, the effort to go the distance is just what the doctor ordered.

Research shows that moderate-intensity exercise, like walking, strengthens your heart, lungs, and muscles. It also helps you control your weight, sleep better at night, reduce your risk for many chronic diseases, and live longer.

Adults should exercise at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week. If you're not doing that already, set a goal to improve. Gradually increase the amount of time you exercise, and track your progress. With a little effort, you'll be strong enough to complete an organized walk or run in your area. And you don't need to be a diehard runner. All you have to do is follow the crowd to the finish line for better health.

*Harvard School of Public Health.
American College of Sports Medicine.
Lilac Bloomsday Association.*



Don't Cry. Onions are Healthy for You.

Cut open the perfect onion, and the sulfuric compounds will bring tears to your eyes. But a few tears are worth the trouble to tap the vegetable's savory taste.

"It's hard to imagine civilization without onions," the late celebrity chef Julia Child once said.

That's because onions are a rich source of flavor used in a wide range of recipes and nearly every ethnic cuisine. They're a required ingredient in salsa, soups, and sauces. And they're commonly found on sandwiches and salads.

Onions add a lot of flavor to the foods we enjoy. And they're healthy too. Onions are low in calories. They contain no sodium, fat or cholesterol. They're a good source of vitamin C, fiber and other nutrients. And studies show that



flavonoids, found in the outer layers of an onion, may help reduce your risk for heart disease, bowel problems, and certain types of cancer.

Whether ordering out or cooking at home, use onions generously to flavor and season your favorite dishes.

Skip the deep-fried onion rings and other cooked-in-fat onion creations. Fresh onions – chopped, minced, thinly sliced, or cooked – are healthy for you and taste great.

Julia Child was right. It would be hard for most of us to imagine life without onions. After all, the average American eats about 20 pounds of onions a year.

Journal of Agricultural and Food Science.

National Onion Association.

Try these onion recipes
<http://www.onions-usa.org/recipes>

Be Picky About Your Popcorn (continued from page 1)

Researchers also found that this chemical was able to pass through a barrier in the brain that normally keeps harmful substances from entering. While this has not yet been studied in humans, it's an important finding in Alzheimer's research. That's because butter flavoring is a widely used ingredient. You'll find it in popcorn, margarine, cooking spray, candy, syrup, snack foods, and baked goods.

Popcorn is still good for you. Just not the kind coated in salt and butter flavoring. Be picky about your popcorn, and make your own. Air-popped popcorn is low in calories. It contains high levels of antioxidants that help prevent plaque build-up in your arteries. And popcorn hulls are a good source of fiber, which improves bowel health, aids in weight management, and helps prevent type 2 diabetes.

Alzheimer's Association.
Journal of Chemical Research in Toxicology.



Adequate Sleep Prevents Weight Gain

There's a reason an estimated 35 percent of American adults are obese. And it's not just poor food choices and lack of exercise. New research suggests that lack of sleep may also be linked to weight gain and obesity.

Researchers examined a group of sleep-related studies over a 15-year period. They found that poor sleep habits increased the risk for insulin resistance. They also found that lack of sleep increased chemicals in the body linked to weight gain and obesity. These studies showed that chronic lack of sleep increases a person's risk for diabetes and heart disease, often caused by obesity.

You should sleep about 7 to 8 hours a night for best health. Yet an estimated 30 percent of all adults in the United States don't get enough sleep. Experts have long recommended eating healthy foods and exercising regularly to combat obesity. And now adequate sleep may be another way to help you avoid weight gain and other health risk factors.

Here are some ways to improve your ability to enjoy a good night's rest:

- Be physically active daily.

- Be regular in your sleep habits.
- Create a dark, quiet sleeping area.
- Avoid smoking and drinking coffee and alcohol.

Tips to improve sleep habits
<http://wellsource.info/wn/hc-sleep.pdf>

- Avoid eating and watching TV late at night.
- Don't nap too late in the day.
- Make the effort to develop healthy sleep habits. You'll feel better, and reduce your risk for weight gain and obesity.

Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

National Sleep Foundation.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: Is it possible to get enough protein from a vegetarian diet?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-vegetarian-protein.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: evan@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Take Care of Your Teeth" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-brush-floss.pdf
Brush your teeth morning and evening and floss daily.