



Delicious Ways to Ward Off Dementia

Aiming to boost brain health? Pick some berries, sip some tea or slice some apples. A new study links these foods and drinks — rich in compounds called flavonoids — to a lower risk for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.



HOW PLANTS PRESERVE BRAIN CELLS

Flavonoids, found naturally in plants, give many fruits and vegetables their color. Based on their exact chemistry, experts group them into classes with names like flavonols and anthocyanins. Flavonoids are important because they can boost blood flow to the brain as well as protect neurons from toxins.

For the study, researchers took a long-term view, tracking 2,800 people ages 50 and older for 20 years. In that

time, they learned the following about Alzheimer’s disease and other related dementia:

- Consuming fewer flavonols — found in apples, pears and tea — doubled the risk.
- A low intake of flavonoid polymers — found in apples, pears and tea — also doubled the risk.
- Those who fell short on anthocyanins — found in berries and red wine — quadrupled their chances.

SMALL STEPS TO CLEARER THINKING

The results show midlife isn’t too late for positive changes. What’s more, participants didn’t need huge amounts of flavonoids to see benefits. Each month, those with high intake consumed approximately 7.5 cups of berries, eight apples or pears and 19 cups of tea.

Here are three easy ways to include more flavonoids in your day:

- 1. Berries:** Blend strawberries into your smoothie, place blueberries atop yogurt or ice cream or add strawberries to salads. When fresh berries aren’t in season, try frozen (unsweetened).
- 2. Apples:** Snack on slices alone, or with cinnamon, cheese or peanut butter. Or stew and serve with savory dishes, such as pork.
- 3. Tea:** Green tea contains more flavonoids than other blends. Spice up your cup with ginger or mint or sweeten lightly with honey.

Meeting Older Adults’ Needs

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