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#GOBLUE:



BRAIN AGEING AND FUNCTION, WHAT ROLE DOES THE DIET PLAY?

Dementia is a major concern among older adults because it is a cause of dependency and disability. U.S.A. based Rush University has conducted research looking at dietary patterns and Alzheimer’s disease. Through this research they have identified a dietary pattern that may significantly decrease the risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. The basis for the dietary pattern is the Mediterranean diet and the DASH diet and has been termed the MIND Diet (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay).

The MIND Diet places emphasis on foods that have been shown to support brain function and limits those foods that may potentially damage brain health. Some of the foods suggested on the MIND diet can be costly, however research has shown there is still some cognitive benefits seen even if the diet is not followed to a T. The MIND diet encourages/discourages the following:

Eat these foods	How Often	Limit these foods	How often
Green leafy vegetables	Daily	Red Meats	Limit
Other vegetables	At least once a day	Butter & stick margarine	Less than one TBSP per day
Nuts	Daily	Cheese	Less than one serving per week
Berries	At least twice a week	Pastries and sweets	Limit
Beans	Every second day	Fried or fast foods	Less than one serving per week
Whole grains	Daily (three times a day)		
Fish	At least once a week		
Poultry	At least twice a week		
Olive Oil			
Wine	One glass daily		

Ways to incorporate the MIND dietary pattern into your day include: having a green salad and one other vegetable daily; nuts as a snack and buying frozen berries to save on cost. If finances allow, use olive oil to prepare food (limit to 1 tsp per person) or use it as a dressing for your salad. Protein is very important and should be included into lunch and supper daily. You could add tuna to a salad or tinned beans to salads/stews/soups. Pilchards and mackerel are a cheaper source of fish and can be made into curries or fish cakes. To incorporate portion-controlled whole grains in the diet, one could have oats for breakfast, brown rice for supper and barley soup for dinner.

Ways to limit less desirable foods include; replacing red meat with beans and chicken. You can also change your mindset about desserts – it should be seen as a special occasion treat rather than a “must have” to end a meal. You could also change the way you prepare foods, focus on steamed, baked or roasted foods rather than deep fried.

Change is never easy, and the MIND dietary pattern is not a short-term strategy. Find a few small goals that you can achieve, such as eating a salad daily. By doing this you will eat less of the undesirable items. According to the researchers, each small step you take to meet the MIND dietary pattern will have some positive effect on both your brain and heart health. And for those wine enthusiasts, the great news is you can still enjoy your daily glass of wine!

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