



The Gen X Notes

Life After Grunge, Coffee, & Doc Martens Obsession.

The Gen X Notes

Be a Better Friend to Your Brain

Combine a Brain-Friendly Diet With Exercise

Diet & Brain Health

The best foods for brain health are largely the same foods that support heart and blood vessel health. This Tip Sheet highlights several specific foods and the research behind them: Leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables for nutrients that may slow cognitive decline; fatty fish for omega-3s linked to lower beta-amyloid levels; berries for flavonoids that may improve memory; tea and coffee for caffeine's potential benefits to attention and memory; and walnuts for healthy fats and possible cognitive benefits.

Physical Activity & Brain Health

Physical activity helps prolong brain health, likely due to increased blood flow to the brain during exercise, studies show. This activity-based decline in brain health also stimulates hormone production, resulting in enhanced brain cell connections, improved memory, and augmented cognitive function. Additionally, adherence to a regular exercise regimen can help forestall chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Exercise causes the brain's hippocampus—vital for memory and learning—to grow in size. For older adults, this increase in size may contribute to improvements in mental function. What else? Stave off Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, reduce stress and anxiety, boost creativity, help alleviate depression, boost feelings of positivity, and self-esteem.



Brain Health



Brain-Friendly Diet



Physical Activity



Excellent Exercise Options

Walking (simple, easy, cognition)

Swimming (whole-body benefits)

Cycling (easy on the joints)

Dancing (flexibility, balance, brain health)

Weight Training (memory, cognitive health)

Yoga (helps create new neural pathways)

Tai Chi (memory, reasoning, planning)

Brain-Healthy Food Options

- **Fatty fish** such as salmon and cod are recommended about twice a week for omega-3s.
- **Leafy and cruciferous greens:** Kale, spinach, collards, and broccoli, provide nutrients associated with better brain health.
- **Berries** may help memory; regular consumption of strawberries and blueberries was linked to slower memory decline in one study.
- **Walnuts** are highlighted as a brain-friendly nut because of their omega-3 content and possible links to better cognitive test scores.
- **Tea and coffee** may support concentration and memory because of caffeine.
- **Healthy snacks** are okay in moderation and should consist of items like fruit, whole grains, or nuts to satisfy hunger without causing excessive weight gain.