

[IMAGE]

Antioxidants for the Brain

By Editorial Staff

Antioxidants are molecules that inhibit the oxidation of other molecules. From a health perspective, oxidation is dangerous because oxidation reactions can produce free radicals - unstable molecules that can damage healthy cells, leading to cancer and other health complications - including cognitive decline, a reduction in brain function that is a normal consequence of aging, but can be more pronounced in brain-related diseases such as Alzheimer's.

A recent study suggests antioxidants help preserve cognitive decline. The study was designed "to assess the relationship between dietary intake of antioxidants (vitamin C, vitamin E, β -carotene, lutein, flavonoids and lignans) and cognitive decline at middle age." Subjects 40-70 years old were assessed by what they ate and "with a neuropsychological test battery." These were then divided into five "quintiles" (levels) based upon their consumption of the above antioxidants.

brain - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Results showed that "higher lignan (found in cereals, broccoli, cabbage, apricots & strawberries) intake was linearly associated with less decline in global cognitive function, memory and processing speed"; and that "in the lowest quintile of vitamin E intake (found in wheat germ, sunflower, safflower, palm, and olive oils, and most nuts) decline in memory was twice as fast as in all higher quintiles." In other words, subjects who consumed the least vitamin E showed the biggest declines in memory.

Fortunately, antioxidants are present in a variety of foods, particularly fruits and vegetables. So clean out your refrigerator and load up on your antioxidants today!

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