

[IMAGE]

Brain Aging: Blame Your Diet

By Editorial Staff

The brain is a remarkable bundle of neurons that directs every thought and function in the human body. However, the reality is that no matter what, as we age, our brain ages, too. Sometimes, that just means our memory suffers a bit in our senior years; other times, our aging brain can yield more severe consequences in the form of cognitive decline or dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

Do the foods we eat (and don't eat) play a role in brain aging? You bet they do - and the diet consumed by Tsimane indigenous people of the Bolivian Amazon may give us a big clue. According to new research, they experience dramatically less brain aging (less loss of brain volume) compared to Western populations - you know, populations that typically eat the Western diet high in greasy, fatty, processed, refined-carbohydrate foods.

brain aging - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark So, what do the Tsimane people eat instead? A diet characterized by essentially none of the above foods. Their lifestyle is one of hunting, gathering, fishing, and farming, which means plenty of fresh, whole, unprocessed foods. Western culture has access to the same diet in general - we just choose not to pursue it, reaching instead for the countless cookies, snacks and fast-food items readily available to us.

Study findings, which appear in the *Journal of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, make it abundantly clear: what you eat affects how your brain ages. Learn from the best (by the way, the Tsimane people also have dramatically low rates of cardiovascular disease) and eat more whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, fish, fruits and vegetables, and other choices that give your brain – and your entire body – the best chance of aging gracefully.

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