

[IMAGE]

Plant Foods: Good for Your Brain

By Editorial Staff

Research continues to assert the health benefits of a plant-based diet, particularly in terms of heart health. That's because compared to animal foods, plant-based foods generally boast low levels of cholesterol and saturated fat. Then there's the micronutrient advantage: plant foods are packed with vitamins and minerals that benefit the human body on myriad levels, reducing disease risk including various forms of cancer.

Your brain also benefits from favoring plant foods in your diet, particularly when you're older. In fact, a diet rich in plant-based foods significantly reduces the risk of cognitive decline and dementia, suggests new research. The 12-year study tracked 842 seniors (over the age of 65), analyzing participants' diet and correlating it with cognitive health. All seniors were deemed free of cognitive limitations at the start of the study.

Results, published in *Molecular Nutrition and Food Research*, are summarized by the researchers as follows: "Food-related and microbiota-derived metabolites may play an important role in the later development of [cognitive decline]. Our results support a protective association between metabolites reflecting the consumption of polyphenol-rich foods (i.e., fruits and vegetables), cocoa, coffee, mushrooms and red wine with CD, whereas other food components related to unhealthy dietary components (i.e., alcohol, artificial sweeteners) may have deleterious effects on cognition."

Cognitive decline is no laughing matter; after all, as we age, keeping our bodies and brains healthy and functioning becomes our two biggest priorities. Imagine if eating certain foods – and avoiding certain other foods – is all it takes?

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