

Resources provided following the 2/22/24 ECHO Session on the MIND Diet for Cognitive Health

Nutrition Resources from Participants

Dr. Drew Ramsey and Dr. Uma Naidoo who are nutritional psychiatrists

[Feed Your Head: Foods That Target Depression and Anxiety – UmaNaidooMD](#)

Smart Phrase for EPIC

If you are in the EPIC/UVM Network just email me at

Maryval.palumbo@uvmhealth.org and I can share my smart phrase about the MIND diet with you. Here it is if you want to create a smartphrase of your own.

The MIND Diet May Help Prevent Alzheimer's Brain-Friendly Foods

MIND stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. It's similar to two other healthy meal plans: [the DASH diet](#) and the [Mediterranean diet](#). But the MIND approach "specifically includes foods and nutrients that medical literature and data show to be good for the brain, such as berries," says Martha Clare Morris, ScD, director of nutrition and nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center.

You eat things from these 10 food groups:

- Green leafy vegetables (like spinach and salad greens): At least six servings a week
- Other vegetables: At least one a day
- Nuts: Five servings a week
- Berries: Two or more servings a week
- Beans: At least three servings a week
- [Whole grains](#): Three or more servings a day
- Fish: Once a week
- Poultry (like chicken or turkey): Two times a week
- Olive oil: Use it as your main cooking oil.
- Wine: One glass a day

You avoid:

- Red meat: Less than four servings a week
- Butter and margarine: Less than a tablespoon daily
- Cheese: Less than one serving a week
- Pastries and sweets: Less than five servings a week
- Fried or fast food: Less than one serving a week

The Benefits

One study showed that people who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk of Alzheimer's disease by 54%. That's big. But maybe even more importantly, researchers found that adults who followed the diet only part of the time still cut their risk of the disease by about 35%. On the other hand, people who followed the DASH and Mediterranean diets "moderately" had almost no drop in their Alzheimer's risk, Morris says. Scientists need to do more research on the MIND approach, "but it's a very promising start. It shows that what you eat *can* make an impact on whether you develop late-onset Alzheimer's," which is the most common form of the disease, says Cecilia Rokusek, a registered dietitian at Nova Southeastern University.

Should You Follow the MIND Diet?

Even if you don't have a family history of Alzheimer's disease or other risk factors, you may still want to try this eating plan. It focuses on nutritious [whole foods](#), so "it's not just good for your brain. It's good your heart and overall health, too," says Majid Fotuhi, MD, PhD. He is the chairman and CEO of the Memosyn Neurology Institute.

One of the best things about the plan is that you don't have to stick to it perfectly to see benefits, Rokusek says. "That makes it more likely you'll follow it for a long time," she says. And the longer people eat the MIND way, the lower their risk of getting Alzheimer's disease, Morris says. If you do decide to make your diet more MIND-like, Rokusek recommends you take a few extra steps. "Keep your portions in check, and be careful about how food is prepared. Sauces, breading, and oils can add extra calories and hidden ingredients like [sugar](#)," she says. "Make a point to drink several glasses of water a day, too."

Last, understand that even though diet plays a big role, "it's only one aspect of Alzheimer's disease," Fotuhi says. So get regular [exercise](#) and manage your [stress](#) to lower your risk even more, he says.

SOURCES:

Martha Clare Morris, ScD, associate professor, Rush Institute for Healthy Aging; director of Nutrition and Nutrition Epidemiology, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago.

Morris, M.C. *Alzheimer's and Dementia*, 2015.

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