

Introduction

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia,

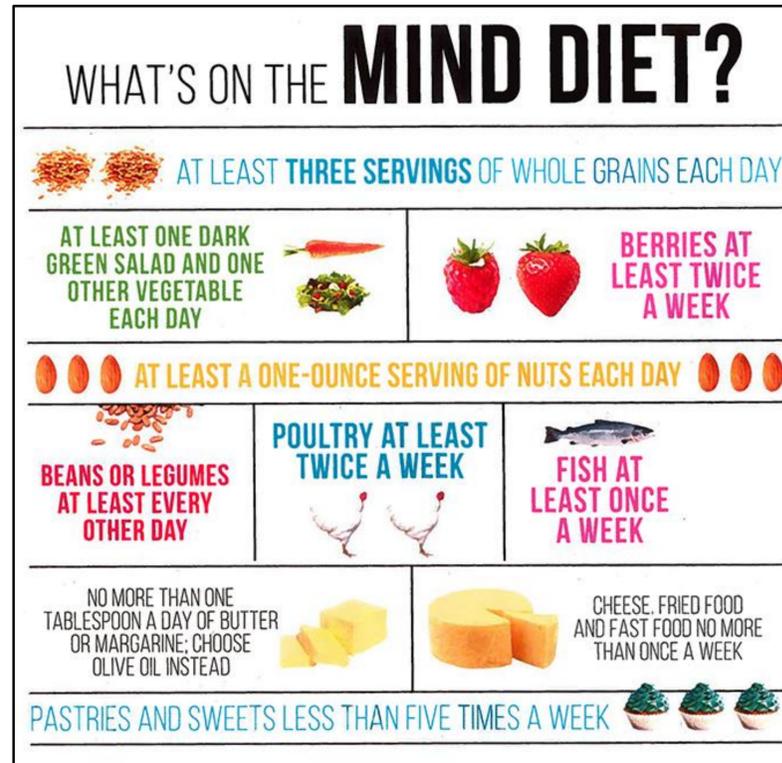
Clinical research recommends people diagnosed with any form of cognitive decline to maintain a healthy diet with **Omega-3 fatty acids, frequent exercise, social engagement, and intellectual stimulation.**

Neuroprotective refers to the protection of the neural tissue and function of the brain

- Includes: **Omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and phytochemicals**

It is supposed that these nutrients are **responsible for reducing oxidative stress and free radicals, which can cause cell damage.**

The **Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet** combines the Mediterranean diet and the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet.



Pacific Brain Health Institute:
<https://www.pacificneuroscienceinstitute.org/brain-health/specialty-programs/healthy-aging/brain-health-diet/>

Significance

"In 2017, a total of 261,914 deaths attributed to dementia as an underlying cause of death were reported in the United States."

-CDC, National Vital Reports

By placing emphasis on food that might make impact on cognitive health, or even possible neuroprotective properties, we might be able to **slow the progression of cognitive decline in older adults.**

The purpose of this poster is to present the current research on **the relationship between cognitive function and adherence to the Mediterranean diet as it relates to the older adult population.**

Methodology

Search Criteria: Research was gathered from PubMed, Google Scholar, the Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics, and databases in partner with the Tennessee Technological University.

Key terms: "mental health and the Mediterranean diet," "cognitive decline and the Mediterranean diet," "cognition and the Mediterranean diet," "MIND diet and cognitive function", and "cognitive function and the Mediterranean diet."

- **Inclusions:** Peer-reviewed original research articles from journals that had been published within the past 10 years.
- **Exclusions:** Articles that were not available in full text versions, if the article was not in English, or if the data was not available.

Results

- After reviewing **nine studies**, all with varying research questions and designs: **8 of 9 studies suggested a positive association, relationship, or link between cognitive health and the Mediterranean diet.**
- **Specific foods in the Mediterranean Diet might have a protective effect on cognition.**
- Diets that were high in **vegetables and monounsaturated fatty acids seemed to have a very slight inverse association with cognitive decline.**
- Groups that had higher consumption of **vegetables, fruits and nuts, legumes, and fish** were significantly associated with a little to no cognitive decline.



Conclusions

- The lack of effective treatments for cognitive decline and dementia recognizes **a need for preventive strategies to delay the onset or minimize the effects of these conditions.**
- This research will do well to inform the formulation of a future research proposal pertaining to the Mediterranean diet and its relationship with cognitive health. Also, to encourage further exploration on the individual food items that make up this diet, as they might be more neuroprotective than was once believed.

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