



MIND Diet for Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive degeneration of memory and other important psychological functions due to brain cell degeneration. It is the most common cause of dementia, affecting more than five million people living in the United States.

Although medication and other behavioural management strategies may temporarily improve its symptoms, the disease is not completely curable. The "MIND diet" is a new concept which was discovered recently in search of a preventive strategy for this crippling psychological condition.

The "Mediterranean – DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay", which is better known by the acronym "MIND diet" is a hybrid of the Mediterranean diet and the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, that have been found to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

The prospective study which was carried out while developing this diet, compared the Mediterranean and DASH diets with the new MIND diet. It revealed that the latter has the ability to lower the risk of Alzheimer's disease even though the diet is not meticulously followed. It was found to have 53% reduction in the risk of developing the disease in those who followed the MIND diet rigorously, while 35% reduction was seen in those who moderately followed it. In contrast, the former two types of diets could lower the disease risk only with strict adherence. (Morris et al., 2015)

The MIND diet includes 10 "brain healthy food groups" and the "unhealthy food groups" as follows. It is important to include foods from "brain healthy food groups" to our diet in recommended amounts and frequencies, while avoiding or limiting the intake of foods from "unhealthy food groups", to pave the path for a long mindful life.

| “Brain healthy food groups” | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Recommended food groups | | Serving size | Recommended servings /day | Recommended servings / week | Examples for local varieties |
| 1. | Whole grains | ½ Cup | 3 servings/ day | 21 servings | Brown rice, Whole grain bread/pasta, Oat meal |
| 2. | Green leafy vegetables | 3 tablespoon | 1 serving/ day | 6-7 servings | Spinach, gotukola, amaranth, mukunuwenna, sarana, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce |
| 3. | Other vegetables | 3 tablespoon | 1 serving/ day | 6-7 servings | Brinjal, bottle gourd, snake gourd |
| 4. | Nuts | 1 Ounce, ½ cup | 1 serving/ day | 6-7 servings | Pea nut, cashew, Sri Lankan almond |
| 5. | Pulses | ½ cup | 1 serving/ EOD | 3-4 servings | Chickpea, cowpea, dhal, mung |
| 6. | Fish | 3 ounces (~ 90g) | Once in 3- 4 days | More than 1 serving/week | Small fish more preferred eg: herrings, Salaya, salmon, sardine |
| 7. | Poultry | 3 ounces (~90g) | Once in 2-3 days | More than 2 servings /week | Chicken, turkey |
| 8. | Berries | ½ cup | Once in 2-3 days | More than 2 servings /week | Sri Lankan berries(Goose berry, mal berry, dan, maadan) Strawberries, blueberries |
| 9. | Olive oil | | | | Primary oil at home |
| 10. | Wine / purple grape juice | 5 ounces (~150ml) | 1 serving/d | 6-7 servings / week | Red wine. If not drinking wine, may be replaced with purple grape juice |

| <i>Foods to avoid / eat sparingly – “Unhealthy food groups”</i> | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Red meat | Eat rarely |
| Butter | < 1 tablespoon / day |
| Cheese | < 1 servings / week |
| Pastries and sweets | Avoid |
| Fried / fast foods | < 1 serving/ week |
| Salt | Less than 1 teaspoon / day |

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References

Morris, M., Tangney, C., Wang, Y., Sack, F., Bennett, D. and Aggarwal, N. (2015). MIND Diet Associated with Reduced Incidence of Alzheimer's Disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia : The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, 11(9), pp.1007 - 1014.