

News and information for those attending the monthly Vegetarian Cooking Classes at the Central Coast Adventist School or other Health Programs sponsored by the Erina Seventh-day Adventist Church

Fight the Brain Drain

Do you ever feel as though your brain isn't as fast and sharp as it once was? Cognitive problems have become of serious concern in Australia.



Dementia has become the single greatest cause of disability in older Australians (aged 65 years or older). **Every week** there are 1700 new cases of dementia diagnosed in Australia.

The good news is that you can make small and consistent changes to your diet and lifestyle **NOW** to start protecting your brain from early memory loss and the future prospects of dementia. Here's how:

Good Nutrition

Food is powerful! It can also improve your brain speed, agility and retention of information. And getting the best food for thought is not all that difficult. In a nutshell, it includes enjoying a **variety** of vegetables (particularly the green leafy ones), wholegrains, legumes, nuts/seeds and fruit – regularly! Especially the deeply coloured foods like blueberries, strawberries and acai berries as well as herbs and spices, like oregano and turmeric. Living on a junk food diet high in trans fats, on the other hand, may lead to a certain type of brain shrinkage associated with Alzheimer's Disease, according to a study published in the journal *Neurology*.

Important *brain vitamins* that have been identified as being key memory helpers include vitamins E and B.

To boost your dose of vitamin E, consume (¼ cup) of seeds and/or nuts daily, including almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, pecans, pistachios, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds and linseeds (or flaxseeds). Vitamin E is also found in broccoli, sweet potatoes, mangoes and avocados.

B Vitamins (folate, B₆, B₁₂) You can easily obtain folate from 'foliage' foods. The main sources include all green leafy vegetables, beans (legumes), peas, citrus fruits and fortified grain products like Weet-bix. Vitamin B₆ is found in leafy greens and beans, but you can also get it from bananas, nuts, sweet potato and wholegrains. Vitamin B₁₂ is found in fortified foods like some brands of soy milk and in most multivitamins and B₁₂ supplements.

Adequate and regular intake of omega-3 fatty acids appears to protect against cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. The best sources are oily fish, Good sources of plant omega-3 fatty acids are walnuts, linseeds (flaxseeds), linseed oil and chia seeds.

Good exercise

Research shows that exercise may stop, slow or reverse brain shrinkage that comes with ageing. Put at least 150 minutes of activity into your weekly schedule and treat it like you would any other important appointment.

Good sleep

Sleep deprivation kills our memory. Sleep serves like a librarian, neatly filing away all the stuff you've gathered during your

This Month Wonderful Grains



Our next class will be on **Monday May 27** starting at **6:45 pm**. As the title above says, Marcia Townend, nutritionist, will talk about some very interesting new research on grains and their benefits.

This Month's Menu

Once again you will be cooking healthy vegetarian dishes that also taste delicious. Here are some recipes on the menu.

-  Vegetable and Pearl Barley Soup
-  Mushroom & Lentil Stew
-  Chewy Indonesian Rice
-  Corn Bread

Bookings are essential so that we can buy the right amount of ingredients. Please email or ring Cheryl on 0403 848242. The cost is \$15 payable on the night.

Quotable Quote

"I don't understand why asking people to eat a well-balanced vegetarian diet is considered drastic, while it is medically conservative to cut people open and put them on cholesterol-lowering drugs for the rest of their lives." Dean Ornish, M.D.

This Month's Recipe Carotenoids to Reduce Breast Cancer

Sweet Potato Lasagna

Tomato Sauce Ingredients

1 Tbsp olive oil
 1 Tbsp chopped onion
 1 Tbsp chopped carrot
 1 Tbsp chopped celery
 1 garlic clove
 pinch salt
 pinch ground coriander
 pinch cumin
 pinch turmeric
 1 tin chopped tomatoes

To make the sauce

Sweat the onion, carrot and celery with the garlic in the olive oil.

Add a pinch of salt to allow the vegetables to sweat without burning.

As the vegetables begin to sweat, add a good pinch each of ground coriander, cumin and turmeric.

When soft, add the chopped tomatoes. Bring to the boil, check for seasoning and simmer for 15 minutes before blending.

Lasagna Ingredients

2 medium leeks
 1 onion, chopped
 1 tsp fresh thyme
 2 medium sweet potatoes peeled and sliced into 5mm rounds

Lasagna Method

Slice leeks lengthwise. Chop the halves into 3cm lengths, then finely chop the onion. Gently stew the leek and onion in a little oil with the thyme until tender. Season to taste.

Cook sweet potatoes on the griddle or in a frypan until almost soft. Layer the ingredients in a dish and finish with a dollop of spiced tomato sauce on top. Serve with a leafy salad and garlic bread.



The American Institute for Cancer Research's expert report and its continuous updates show that foods high in carotenoids protect against cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx and lung. Two reviews of the research that looked at blood levels now point to the possibility that sweet potatoes, tomatoes and the many other colorful fruits and vegetables high in carotenoids may also reduce women's risk of breast cancer.

Carotenoids are a large group of phytochemicals (see sidebar) well recognized by their red, orange and yellow hues; many dark green vegetables, such as kale and spinach, are also rich sources.

Several studies measuring blood concentration showed a strong link between carotenoids and reduced breast cancer risk. The reduced risk was seen for total carotenoids and the individual phytochemicals.

"In our study, we saw about a 20 to 30 percent decreased risk of breast cancer when comparing the highest blood concentration of carotenoids to the lowest," says Dagfinn Aune, an epidemiologist at Imperial College London and lead author of an analysis that assessed carotenoid intake.

A second analysis, published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, found that those women with the highest levels of total carotenoids linked to almost 20 percent lower breast cancer risk.

Carotenoids

- Alpha-carotene
- Beta-carotene
- Beta-cryptoxanthin
- Lutein
- Lycopene
- Zeaxanthin

Plant Sources

Colors: Red, orange, yellow and some dark green

Fruits: Apricots, cantaloupe, citrus fruits, nectarines, papayas, peaches, watermelon

Vegetables: Bok choy, broccoli, carrots, corn, greens (collards, kale, lettuce, spinach), pumpkin, red peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and tomato products, winter squash

Possible Actions and Benefits

- act as an antioxidant
- inhibit cancer cell growth
- improve immune response

Lower risk was also associated with higher levels of many individual carotenoids, including lycopene, alpha-carotene and beta-carotene.

Said Aune. "We know that carotenoids are biomarkers of fruits and vegetables... it could be specific benefits of carotenoids, but it could also be the whole package of antioxidants and other beneficial things you find in fruits and vegetables."