



# K-State Extension Connection

## Boost Brain Power with Better Nutrition

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Feeling forgetful? There could be a number of reasons, but studies show there are some things we can do to improve our mental function. Key components to better brain health include sleeping well, exercising regularly, and, of course, getting good nutrition.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at <https://www.eatright.org/> has identified four types of food that specifically help boost our brain power:



- **Vegetables**

It's a phrase we've heard before: "Eat your vegetables!" Getting adequate veggie-intake, especially cruciferous ones including broccoli, cabbage and dark leafy greens, may help improve memory. Try a kale salad or substitute collard greens for a tortilla in your next sandwich wrap. Broccoli stir-fry is also an excellent option for lunch or dinner.

- **Berries**

Dark berries especially, such as blackberries, blueberries and cherries — are a rich source of anthocyanins and other flavonoids that may boost memory function. Enjoy a handful of berries for a snack, mixed into cereal or baked into an antioxidant-rich dessert. You can reap these benefits from fresh, frozen or dried berries and cherries.

- **Omega-3 fatty acids**

Essential for good brain health, omega-3 fatty acids, docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA, in particular, may help improve memory in healthy young adults. Seafood, algae and fatty fish — including salmon, blue fin tuna, sardines and herring — are some of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Substitute fish for meat a couple times each week to get a healthy dose. Grill, bake or broil fish for ultimate flavor and nutrition. Try salmon tacos with red cabbage slaw, snack on sardines or enjoy seared tuna on salad greens for dinner. If you don't eat fish, discuss other food options and supplementation with your doctor or registered dietitian nutritionist. You can get omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil, seaweed or microalgae supplements.

- **Walnuts**

Well known for a positive impact on heart health, walnuts also may improve cognitive function.

Snack on a handful of walnuts to satisfy midday hunger, add them to oatmeal or a salad for crunch or mix them into a vegetable stir-fry for extra protein.

Even better, these foods are not JUST brain boosters, they help sustain a healthy heart and all other parts of the body as well. While there's no guarantee that these foods will help you remember where you put your keys tomorrow, over time they can support lifelong good health.

Find more information about these topics and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](http://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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