

## HOW TO KEEP A SHARP MIND – PURPOSE - EATING

The AARP described five pillars, based on the existing scientific evidence that demonstrates actions that are fundamental to promoting good cognitive function across the life span. **These practices will keep your mind sharp no matter your age.** Although the words have been modified to increase retention probability the concepts are the same.

**Purpose:** Over the past two decades dozens of studies have shown that **older people with a sense of purpose in life are less likely to develop a slew of ailments-from mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease,** to disabilities, heart attacks, and strokes.

With purpose comes a love of life and all the experiences it offers. **Purpose also puts a damper on depression,** which can be common in one's later years and **is a huge risk factor in itself for memory decline, stroke, and dementia.** In fact, feeling you have a purpose in life right now might reduce your risk of future dementia by up to 20 percent. There is power in purpose, learning, and discovery so start a new hobby, learn a new skill, study a new subject, and so forth.

**Eating:** The link between diet and brain health has long been anecdotal. **But now we finally have evidence** to show that consuming certain foods, while limiting certain other foods can help avoid memory and brain decline, protect the brain against disease, and maximize it's performance. Eating well is more important than **ever now that we know our diet can affect our brain health,** as well as our overall health. Following the A, B, C list of foods is an excellent starting point.

**A – list of foods to consume regularly:** fresh vegetables (in particular greens such as spinach, chard, kale, arugula, collard greens, romaine lettuce, Swiss chard); whole berries, but not juice; healthy fats like extra virgin olive oil, avocados, whole eggs; nuts and seeds.

**B – list of foods to include:** beans and other legumes; whole fruits; low sugar, low-fat dairy like plain yogurt and cottage cheese, and whole grains.

**C – list of foods to limit:** fried food; pastries, sugary foods; processed foods; red meat; whole-fat dairy high in saturated fat, such as cheese and butter, and salt. (1)

Yes, probably 90% have heard this before, but what percent actually practice these eating habits? What would your estimate be? Maybe 50%?

(1) Sanjay Gupta, *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age.* Simon & Schuster, New York, pp. 125,172-173.

*Submitted by:* Dr. Dale Johnson