

## Strategies for a Healthy Brain

### Exercise and Your Brain

We know that exercising is good for your heart, bones, blood pressure and waistline. *Did you know that exercise is also good for your brain?* A 44-year study found that movement decreases the risk of brain diseases.

Researchers recruited almost 200 women in 1968 to rank their level of fitness. The participants could choose their level of fitness as high, medium or low. At the beginning of the study, the average age of the women was 50 years old. Over 44 years, the women were tested for dementia six times. Only 1 in 20 of the highly fit women developed dementia, while 1 in 4 of the moderately fit and 1 in 3 of the least fit developed dementia. In addition, for the few highly fit women who developed dementia, the average age of dementia onset was not until around 90, almost 11 years later than the moderately fit group. (*Neurology, March 14, 2018*)



### Food and Your Brain

There is no “superfood” that improves memory, concentration, mood and prevents dementia. However, there are many everyday foods that research shows improve and promote brain health. The great news is that these foods are good for the rest of our bodies as well. They include:

- ◆ **Blueberries**—In animal studies, blueberries were found to protect the brain from stress, and possibly reduce the symptoms of age-related disease including Alzheimer’s Disease and other forms of dementia. In addition, research has shown that diets rich in blueberries improve learning capacity and motor skills of aging rats, making them mentally equivalent to younger rats.
- ◆ **Wild Salmon**—Deep-water fish including wild salmon, herring and sardines are rich in omega-3 essential fatty acids, which are essential for brain health. They also may raise your HDL or “Good” Cholesterol.
- ◆ **Nuts and Seeds**—These are good sources of Vitamin E, shown to help prevent cognitive decline as we age.
- ◆ **Avocados**—This healthy fruit contains monounsaturated fat, contributing to healthy blood flow and a healthy brain. Since avocados are high in calories, limit your intake to 1/4 to 1/2 of a medium avocado daily.
- ◆ **Beans**—These powerful foods help stabilize glucose. The brain is dependent on glucose for fuel and beans provide a steady flow of this energy.
- ◆ **Whole Grains**—If it’s good for your heart, it’s good for your brain. Whole grains promote health by reducing the risk of diabetes and stroke which both damage brain cells. Oats, quinoa, and brown rice are examples of whole grains.
- ◆ Other foods including pumpkin seeds, broccoli, and tomatoes have research backing them up as “brain food”.



## Sleep and Your Brain

Proper and appropriate sleep reduces the risk of many brain diseases. Many of us don't get the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep we need. Studies show that during sleep, the brain clears out toxins and waste particles that build up while we're awake. This process may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's Disease. Sleep problems also impair learning, attention and concentration in children and adults.

Almost half of adults report not getting the recommended six and a half to eight hours of sleep.

*The good news is that we can make changes in our lives to improve our sleep!*

### Seven Tips to Improve Your Sleep Quality:

1. Stick to a schedule—Get up at the same time, 7 days a week.
2. Move—Regular physical activity during the day improves sleep quality and duration.
3. Avoid caffeine too late in the day.
4. Limit beverages for three hours before you lie down for bed.
5. Avoid naps lasting longer than 30 minutes.
6. Remove or shut off electronics including your TV and smartphone.
7. Keep your sleep area as dark and cool as possible.

### Recharge Your Battery With Sleep



## September—Roasted Salmon w/ Chickpeas, Zucchini & Red Pepper

Recipe adapted from Weight Watchers

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tsp paprika, smoked, sweet variety
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/3 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- 2 medium zucchini, cut into 1-in chunks
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 15.5 oz canned low-sodium chickpeas, rinsed
- 4 tsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 lb uncooked skinless, wild salmon filet, cut into 4 equal pieces
- 4 Tbsp fat-free plain Greek Yogurt

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- Combine paprika, coriander, cumin, salt and pepper in a small bowl; mix well to combine and set aside.
- Combine zucchini, red pepper, onion and chickpeas on a large sheet pan (12x16in); add 1 Tbsp oil and 4 tsp spice mixture. Toss well to coat evenly and spread in a single layer; bake 20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, coat salmon w/ remaining tsp olive oil and spice mixture; set aside.
- Remove sheet pan from oven; toss vegetables with a spatula. Clear spaces and set salmon directly on pan; return to oven; bake for an additional 10 minutes.
- To serve, dollop 1 Tbsp yogurt over each piece of salmon; sprinkle w/ shredded mint. Garnish w/ additional mint springs, if desired; serve immediately with lemon wedges.

### Nutrition Information

Total Servings - 4

Serving Size: 1 salmon filet and 1 c bean-veggie mixture

Calories: 200/ Total Fat: 13g / Saturated Fat: 2g / Sodium: 400mg / Carbs: 26g /

Fiber: 6g / Sugars: 10g / Protein: 31g



For more information, contact Be Well Solutions at (888) 935-7378 or [info@bewellsolutions.com](mailto:info@bewellsolutions.com).



**The 2018 Sleep Foundation survey of sleep habits suggests that U.S. adults who get good, consistent sleep are also good at getting things done.** But for the majority of those people surveyed, sleep is not a priority over work, social activities and other aspects of living.

**The Foundation warns that adults and children are consistently overscheduling their lives and neglecting their sleep needs — a habit that can jeopardize good health and may shorten lifespan.** Clocking fewer than 6 to 7 hours of shut-eye night after night can have detrimental effects, both short- and long-term.

**Sleep-health Rx:** At least 7 hours of restful sleep per night can help protect your heart and immunity; control blood sugar, weight gain, stress and depression; and reduce risk for colds and flu. With the potential for increasing disease prevention and longevity, adequate sleep will also leave you feeling mentally fit and more energetic.

**To sleep well, try exercise.** Even a little regular exercise helps, according to the 2013 NSF survey: 76% to 83% of regular exercisers (at vigorous, moderate or light exertion) said their sleep quality was very good or fairly good — while 60% of non-exercisers reported they rarely or never have a good night's sleep.

**Stay aware of your sleep robbers,** such as worry, alcohol, physical problems and lesser priorities. Make slumber your No. 1 goal at the end of each day.



## Fit to the Core

**Working hard to achieve 6-pack abs is not a practical goal for most people.** Instead, focus on strengthening your core muscles. These muscles connect your upper and lower body, supporting your spine and movement. They include your back, hip, chest, buttocks and abdominal area. A weak core contributes to fatigue, back pain, arthritis and other muscle, bone or joint problems.

### Strengthening your core:

- Enhances balance and stability to help prevent falls and injuries.
- Improves flexibility and mobility.
- Reduces overall muscle strain from everyday activities.
- Enhances performance in sports, exercise and work activities.
- Reduces common low back pain and strain.
- Supports good posture, which reduces slouching and improves your appearance.

### Here are some basic ways to build core strength:

- Perform routine aerobic exercise and stay active.
- Begin strength training the core muscles.
- Shop for a core training exercise video.
- Enroll in an exercise class, such as yoga or Pilates, which emphasizes toning the core.



### Bottom line:

Maintaining a strong core will reward you with better energy, health protection and added enjoyment of life in general.



“Because of your **smile**, you make **life** more **beautiful**.” — Thich Nhat Hanh



# Busting DIET Myths

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Search for “diets” and you’ll end up with thousands of results. With so many diets to choose from, you may be wondering which is best.

**The answer:** The ideal diet is the one you can stick to in the long term. It’s a plan that contains foods you enjoy, doesn’t cause deprivation and isn’t filled with costly ingredients or supplements. The key is what works best for you, whether you have certain dietary preferences or must avoid some foods.

Many diets are considered fads because they don’t last long and simply don’t work. So, choose one that can become a normal part of your life. If you go on a diet, eventually you will go off a diet. Make permanent changes instead, and learn the truth behind these diet myths:



**>>MYTH: You’ll gain weight if you eat after 8 p.m. FACT:** It’s fine to have a snack between 8 p.m. and bedtime, as long as you’re not grazing all evening. Eating too many treats will lead to weight gain. What matters is what and how much you eat.

**>>MYTH: You can’t eat protein and carbs at the same meal. FACT:** Your digestive tract was built to handle a mix of foods at the same time. There’s no scientific proof that eating meat and bread separately helps with weight loss.

**>>MYTH: Going on a diet is not the best way to lose weight. FACT:** If you restrict calories, you’ll lose weight in the short term, but it likely won’t last. Instead, change the way you eat for the long term. Design a diet that becomes a lifestyle.

## New Colorectal Cancer Screening Guidelines

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAPF

For decades Americans have been advised to begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 50. In May, the American Cancer Society updated its guidelines for colorectal (colon and rectal) cancer screening by lowering the start date to age 45 for people at average risk.

The new recommendation is based in part on the increased incidence of colorectal cancer cases in younger adults. In the past 20 years people under age 55 have had a 51% increase in the cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer and second leading cause of U.S. cancer deaths. More than half of colorectal cancers are linked to lifestyle factors including smoking; obesity; heavy alcohol use; excess red or processed meat; inadequate vegetables, fruit, fiber and calcium; and lack of exercise.

Screening may lower the number of colorectal cancer deaths by half. All types of screening tests are effective at finding cancer, says the ACS. Options include a stool DNA test every 3 years or a colonoscopy every 10 years.

You may need to begin screening even earlier than 45 or more frequently if you have an increased risk for the cancer (e.g., you or a close relative had precancerous colon polyps or colorectal cancer). Consult your health care provider about the best screening schedule for you.



## Statins: True or False?

When lifestyle changes aren’t enough to reduce high cholesterol, statin prescription medications can help. They can lower LDL (bad artery-clogging cholesterol) and triglycerides (blood fats that also raise heart risk), while raising heart-protective HDL (good cholesterol).

Statins have been safely taken by millions of people to lower risk of heart attack, stroke and peripheral artery disease. However, people are often confused by the reported pros and cons of statins.



### Consider these statin myths:

- 1. Statins cause dementia.** Johns Hopkins researchers reviewed 12 studies on statins and found no evidence the drugs harm memory. Instead, long-term statin use appears to protect memory.
- 2. Statins harm your muscles.** Muscle aches from statins usually resolve with a lower dosage or by changing statin types. While the muscle-damaging condition rhabdomyolysis is linked to statin use, it is rare.
- 3. Statins don’t prevent heart disease.** Statins help prevent artery-clogging plaque from rupturing (leading to heart attacks and stroke) and may cause plaque to shrink. Statins also reduce inflammation, a cause of cardiovascular disease.
- 4. Red rice supplements are cheaper and better than statins.** Statins, unlike red rice supplements, are well studied, known to be effective, and regulated for safety by the FDA. Generic versions of statins have made them more affordable, too.

To learn more, visit the American Heart Association at [heart.org](http://heart.org).



Reach your personal best with Smart Moves at [www.personalbest.com/extras/18V9tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/18V9tools).

9.2018