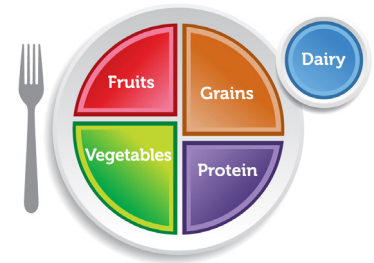




A Pioneering Area Agency on Aging

# Brain Health



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Our brain is one of the most important organs in our body—it is the control center of everything we do. As we age, we may start to notice changes in our mental sharpness and memory. There are many factors that can influence these changes such as genetics, and environmental and lifestyle factors.

We all know that the food we eat affects our bodies and how they function. More research has been done in the past several years that explores how our brain is also affected by the food we eat.

## Eat Your Veggies

Vegetables provide many benefits for our body, including our brain. Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, kale, cabbage and dark leafy green vegetables contain an abundance of antioxidants and phytochemicals. A 2012 study from the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition shows that two of these phytochemicals, Isothiocyanate and Lutein, can accumulate in the brain and provide protection against free radicals and age-related cognitive decline.

Adding in cruciferous vegetables to your diet doesn't have to be complicated. Incorporate some broccoli into your scrambled eggs or omelet. Substitute kale and cabbage for your lettuce salad. Add in some broccoli and cauliflower to your favorite soup or pasta dish.

## Load Up on Berries and Cherries

Not only are berries and cherries sweet and delicious, they are packed full of anthocyanins and other flavonoids. These flavonoids give the berries their dark red and purple color. Anthocyanins may help boost memory function and protect the body against damage from free-radicals. Add in fresh berries to your oatmeal, yogurt and lettuce salads, or blend into a delicious smoothie!



## Fish and Omega-3 Fatty Acids



Omega 3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat and are essential for good brain health. The DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid) is the most abundant fatty acid in the brain

and higher levels will help the brain function more efficiently. Research has shown that a higher concentration of DHA can improve cognition in older adults and work to prevent age-related cognitive decline.

The body cannot make omega-3 fatty acids on its own and must rely on food sources. Omega 3 fatty acids are most prevalent in fatty fish such as salmon, halibut and fresh tuna. Substitute fish for meat a few times a week. Get creative with your cooking methods and seasonings – try grilling, roasting or baking with fresh lemon, dill and garlic.

## Walnuts

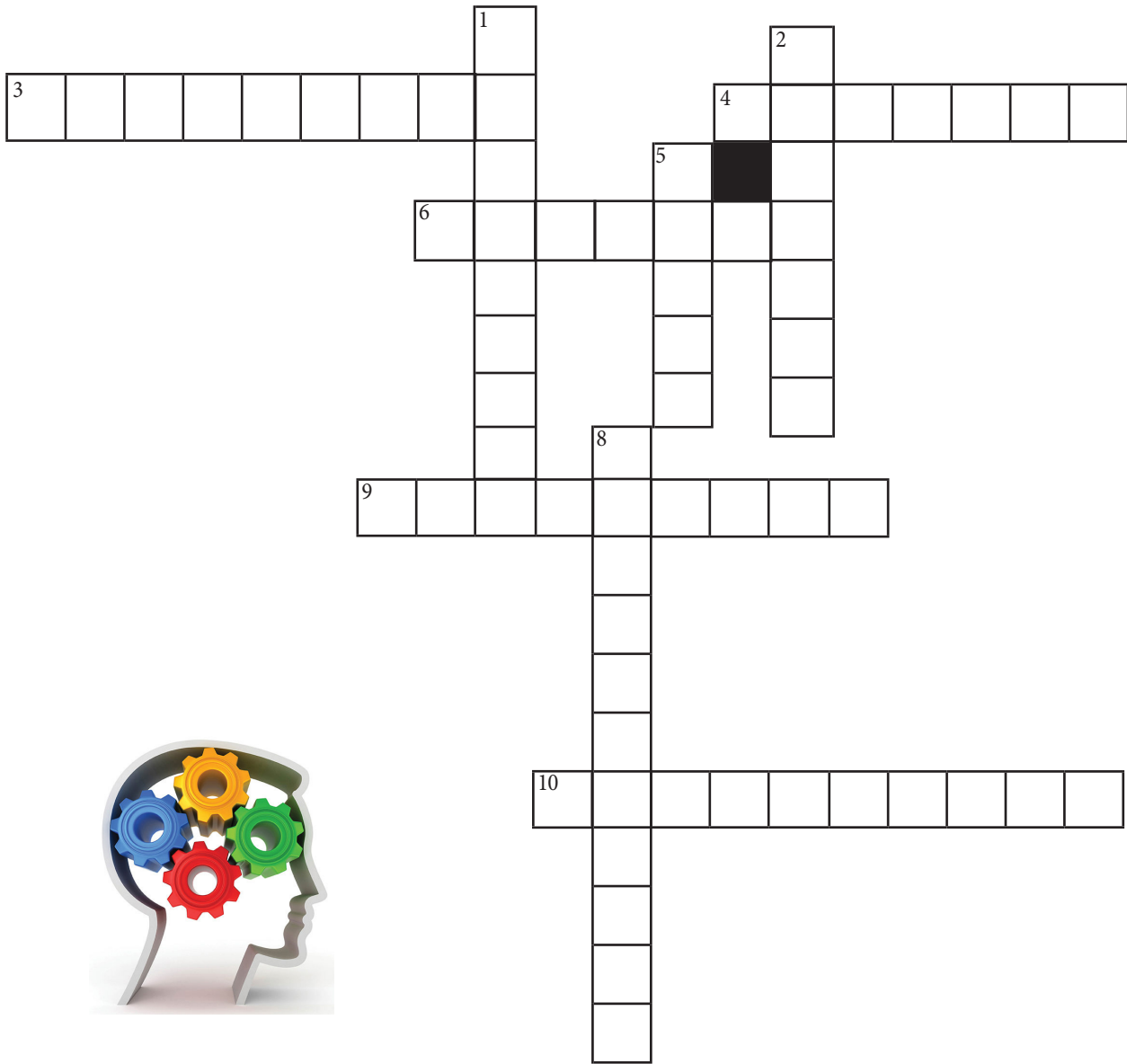
Walnuts also contain a significant amount of the omega-3 DHA, which can have benefits on brain function and cognition. Walnuts can be great as a snack, to top off your salad, mix into some oatmeal or throw into some yogurt.



These foods are not just beneficial for the brain but for the entire body as well. Eating a balanced diet will help support lifelong good health.



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**Across**

- 3. It is recommended to consume \_\_\_\_\_ ounces of water each day.
- 4. Nut that contains the highest amount of omega-3.
- 6. Nutrient that is important to build strong bones.
- 7. This fruit is rich in potassium.
- 9. Type of fat found in animal protein.
- 10. My plate recommends filling your plate with half fruits and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Down**

- 1. This is considered to be the most important meal of the day.
- 2. This type of hot cereal can help to lower cholesterol levels.
- 5. Nutrient that is essential for healthy digestion.
- 8. Family of vegetables that contains broccoli, cabbage, and kale.