

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON SUGAR

A REAL MEMORY ERASER

Ever had a sugar binge and wondered why you felt mentally dizzy, scattered, or couldn't remember anything? If you have, then what you experienced was a brain fog, which now has been tied to sugar consumption and, even worse, dementia.

Mounting research suggests that diet plays a significant role in the skyrocketing prevalence of Alzheimer's. Quick carbohydrates—foods laden with flour, sugar, or high fructose, or drinks with added sugar—elevate the hormone insulin, which we now know is related to a foggy brain and loss of attention.

The connection with sugar, fructose, and foods that turn into sugar quickly and Alzheimer's was first observed in 2005, followed by numerous studies that continue to reveal the correlations between insulin and brain activity. Melissa Schilling, a professor at NYU, has identified insulin and the mechanisms that break it down in the body are tied to the very same mechanisms that break down the amyloid-beta proteins that form tangles and plaques in the brains of people with Alzheimer's. She identified that when people have hyperinsulinemia (i.e. they secrete too much insulin due to a high sugar/fructose diet), the enzymes that break down the insulin are working overtime and are not paying attention to the necessary break down of the amyloid-beta proteins, causing an accumulation in the brain and allowing the disease to progress.

Insulin resistance also raises your risk for heart disease, so it's not surprising to find that heart disease is also associated with Alzheimer's, as is diabetes. A study published in the New

✎ CHRISTA DeGRAZIA OF DeGRAZIA WELLNESS



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England Journal of Medicine explains that even mild elevations of blood sugar level are associated with elevated risk for dementia.

Eating a high fructose diet over time actually alters the way we learn and remember information, leading to brain damage. Insulin resistance, or hyperinsulinemia, is a precursor to diabetes and is preventable. Dr. Richard Lipton of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine claims that individuals with dementia that make significant diet and exercise changes are showing more promise than the drugs for dementia.

The reality is that if we can all begin moving towards a diet that is lower in sugar and processed carbohydrates, we will inevitably see fewer issues with the brain, and will certainly have an improvement in our ability to concentrate and remember things with more attentiveness. This is especially true for children as their brains are still in development.

So, if you have found you're worried about how scattered your brain is or how your children have become mentally sluggish, then it's time to take control.

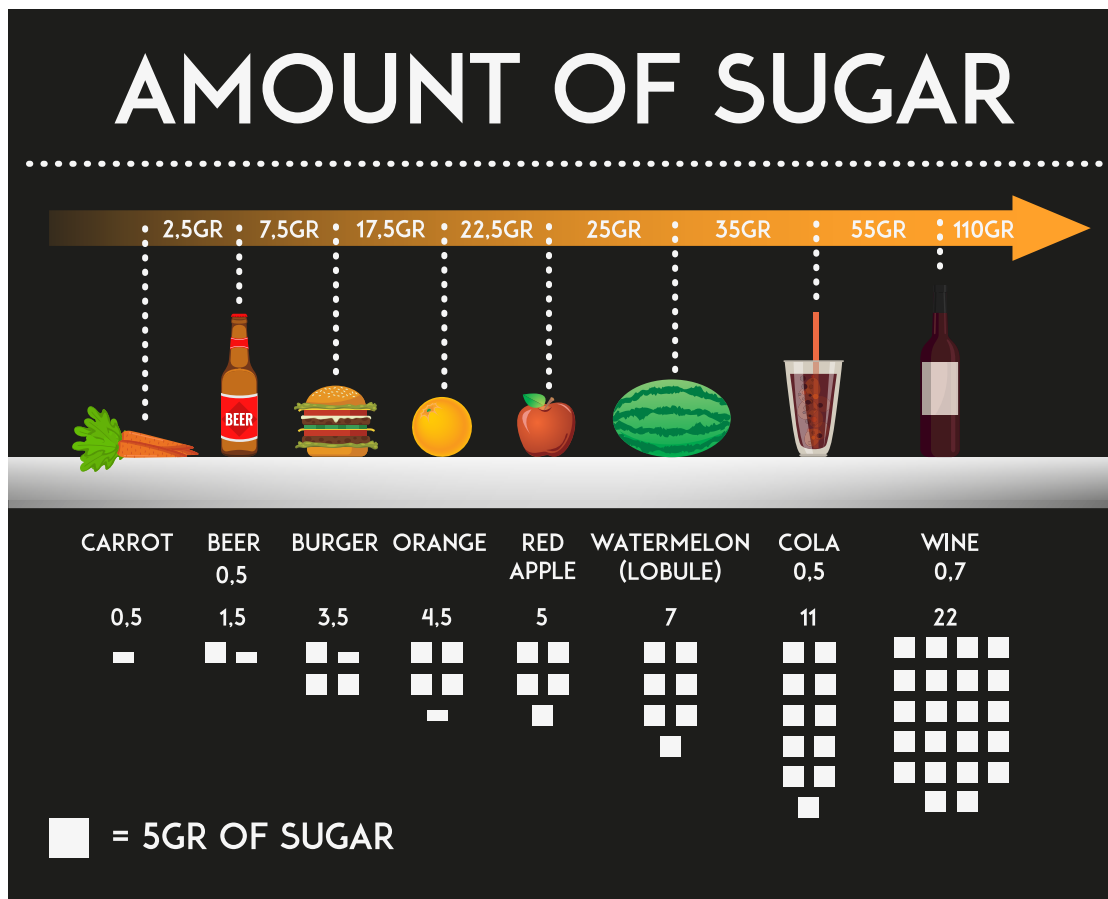
HERE ARE SOME STEPS TO GET YOUR BRAIN IN SHAPE AND TUNED-UP



Eat real food, food that is unaltered—no added sugars or chemicals. Try eating mostly veggies, some fruits, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, and good fats. All carbohydrates should be high fiber and contain very little, if any, flour and sugar.



Optimize magnesium levels, which has been shown to protect the brain.



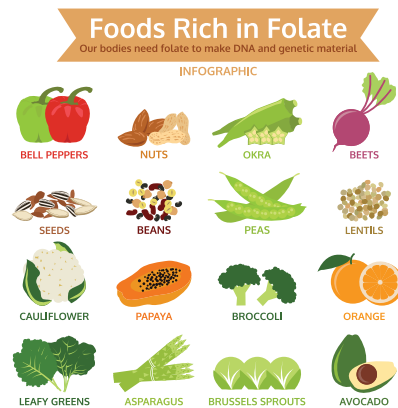
Try to keep your sugar intake to below 25 grams per day (start reading labels).



Take a DHA capsule daily to offset the sugar damage to the brain (DHA protects the brain from the harmful effects of fructose).



Add walnuts, salmon, flaxseeds, avocados, and coconut oil to your diet.



Eat a diet high in folate (veggies) or take a folate supplement.



Take a powerful probiotic daily for better gut health and optimal absorption of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

Optimize vitamin D daily for lowering inflammation in the body and brain.

Research continues to show exercise reduces psychiatric symptoms, increases mental speed, attention, and recall. Seems like a no-brainer here! Exercising four days a week reduces brain lesions/tangles in Alzheimer's patients. People with mild cognitive decline or impairment can significantly improve the cognitive functioning. Exercise leads to brain growth and memory improvement.

Lack of sleep has been linked to brain fog, memory impairment, loss of words, poor recall, lack of concentration, dementia and Alzheimer's. Sleep is the only time that your brain can flush the wastes not needed in order to keep you sharp and clear. The brain's waste removal system is 10 times more active during deep sleep.

Mental stimulation has long been associated with good brain health. Challenging yourself mentally helps to build up your brain and makes it less susceptible to disease as you age. Take up a new sport, learn a new language, start learning a new craft, join a book club, or start a new project around the house that uses your brain and keeps you physically active. 🧠

Christa DeGrazia, MSN, WHNP-BC is a Board Certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioner with expertise in the care of women across the lifespan. DeGrazia completed her master's degree in women's health from Vanderbilt University with post-graduate training in hormone imbalances and urogynecology. She is a member of Theta Sigma Tau Honor Society of Nurses with an avid interest in research. Christa is passionate about partnering with women to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. As a busy Mom of 6, she understands the numerous challenges women face today with their stress, sleep, weight, and hormones. Her private practice in Medford, Oregon offers a unique medical approach for women in a calm, relaxing environment where each woman is offered an individualized plan to eliminate nagging hormone and health concerns, while achieving optimal wellness.

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