

A glass of milk a day could benefit your brain

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Pouring at least one glass of milk each day could not only boost your intake of much-needed key nutrients, but it could also positively impact your brain and mental performance, according to a recent study in the *International Dairy Journal*. Researchers found that adults with higher intakes of milk and milk products scored significantly higher on memory and other brain function tests than those who drank little to no milk. Milk drinkers were five times less likely to "fail" the test, compared to non milk drinkers.

Researchers at the University of Maine put more than 900 men and [women ages](#) 23 to 98 through a series of brain tests – including visual-spatial, verbal and working memory tests – and tracked the milk consumption habits of the participants. In the series of eight different measures of [mental performance](#), regardless of age and through all tests, those who drank at least one glass of milk each day had an advantage. The highest scores for all eight outcomes were observed for those with the highest intakes of milk and [milk products](#) compared to those with low and infrequent milk intakes. The benefits persisted even after controlling for other factors that can affect brain health, including cardiovascular health and other lifestyle and diet factors. In fact, milk drinkers tended to have healthier diets overall, but there was something about milk intake specifically that offered the brain health advantage, according to the researchers.

In addition to the many established health benefits of milk from bone health to cardiovascular health, the potential to stave off mental decline may represent a novel benefit with great potential to impact the aging

population. While more research is needed, the scientists suggest some of milk's [nutrients](#) may have a direct effect on [brain function](#) and that "easily implemented lifestyle changes that individuals can make present an opportunity to slow or prevent neuropsychological dysfunction."

New and emerging brain health benefits are just one more reason to start each day with lowfat or fat free milk. Whether in a latte, in a smoothie, on your favorite cereal, or straight from the glass, milk at breakfast can be a key part of a healthy breakfast that help sets you up for a successful day. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three glasses of lowfat or fat free milk daily for [adults](#) and each 8-ounce glass contains nine essential nutrients Americans need, including calcium and vitamin D.

More information: Crichton GE, Elias MF, Dore GA, Robbins MA. Relation between dairy food intake and cognitive function: The Maine-Syracuse Longitudinal Study. *International Dairy Journal*. 2012; 22:15-23.

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