

Food for thought: Ingredients and foods that give memory a boost

January 14 2013, by Linda Milo Ohr

While there's no magic pill that protects and boosts memory, there are several foods that consumers can easily incorporate into their diets that can help.

In the January issue of *Food Technology* magazine, published by the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT), Contributing Editor Linda Milo Ohr covers the latest research for a variety of memory-boosting ingredients.

- Omega-3 fatty acids—Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and [eicosapentaenoic acid](#) (EPA) found in cold water fish such as salmon are important for brain function and development as well as for their potential to benefit depression, ADHD, and Alzheimer's disease. A 2012 study suggests that dietary intake of EPA and DHA may be linked to improved cognitive health in later life.
- Blueberries and strawberries—Results of a 2011 study showed that greater intakes of blueberries and strawberries were associated with slower rates of cognitive decline and could delay cognitive aging by up to 2.5 years.
- Green tea—Results from a 2012 study using functional [magnetic resonance imaging](#) showed that green tea extract increased activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, a key area that mediates working memory processing in the human brain.
- Magnesium—A 2010 study showed that magnesium improved

brain function—increased learning ability, working memory, and short- and long-term memory in young and aged rats.

- [Cocoa flavanols](#)—Results of a 2102 study showed that the brains of the subjects who consumed a [cocoa drink](#) with a medium or a high concentration of cocoa flavanols over a 30-day period were less strained than those who did not.
- Walnuts—A 2012 study showed that antioxidants present in walnuts and other Mediterranean dietary patterns may help counteract age-related cognitive decline and reduce the incidence of neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease.

Provided by Institute of Food Technologists

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