

# Nutrition and Alzheimer's disease may be linked, study finds

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Malnutrition may increase a person's chances of contracting Alzheimer's disease, which in turn exacerbates malnutrition. That's according to a March 2024 [study](#) out of China published in *Frontiers in Nutrition*.

The study featured 266 subjects, 73 of whom were assessed as cognitively healthy, 72 had mild cognitive impairments because of Alzheimer's, and 121 suffered from dementia. The nutrition of each subject was ranked according to adherence of the Mediterranean and MIND diets.

According to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the Mediterranean diet (which features plant foods, [olive oil](#), cheese, yogurt, fish, poultry, wine and fresh fruits) has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, [metabolic syndrome](#), diabetes, certain cancers, depression and frailty in older adults. The diet has also been shown to improve both mental and physical function.

The MIND diet is specifically designed for the aging brain, the school reported. It incorporates dietary patterns found in the Mediterranean diet, but "whether or not following the MIND diet can slow cognitive aging over longer time periods remains an area of interest."

In the recent study out of China, researchers found no statistical difference concerning ranked diet scores between the different groups. However, the study concluded the subjects affected by Alzheimer's showed lower values of BMI, protein, albumin, globulin, calcium, [folic acid](#) and apolipoprotein A1, smaller calf and hip circumferences, and lower scores in the Mini Nutritional Assessment and Geriatric Nutritional Risk Index scores.

Malnutrition was found not only to be associated with accelerated

progression of Alzheimer's, but also accelerated by the disease.

"The results of this study exhibited that the nutritional status of AD (Alzheimer's disease) patients was worse than that of age-matched cognitively normal individuals, and the [nutritional status](#) further deteriorated with [disease progression](#)," the study reported.

"Currently, the underlying causes of malnutrition in AD remain incompletely understood. It was suggested that the factors affecting food intake, such as taste disorders, olfactory dysfunction and compromised appetite, were the primary contributors to the malnutrition in the early stage of AD. As disease progresses, chronic inflammatory response was gradually intensified, resulting in excessive protein and energy consumptions as the main cause of malnutrition at the middle and late stages of AD."

**More information:** Mingyue He et al, An investigation into the potential association between nutrition and Alzheimer's disease, *Frontiers in Nutrition* (2024). [DOI: 10.3389/fnut.2024.1306226](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2024.1306226)

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