

Brain diseases? Think fat

Question: Is it true that eating more healthy fats can help you avoid brain diseases?

Answer: Your brain is about 90-percent fat in the form of myelin — the protective layer of nerves and brain tissues. And what is myelin made of? It is almost entirely cholesterol, which is healthy fat. Yes, eating healthy fats in your diet is the main means of maintaining a healthy brain and nervous system.

Someone's grandmother said eat your fish, it is brain food. She and every grandmother were correct. When it comes to brain diseases, including but not limited to Parkinson's, dementia, Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS), multiple sclerosis, and even epilepsy, you need to think fat.

That is fat as in fish, eggs, cheese, cream, butter, cod liver oil, flax oil, and even animal fat that is not fried. It is not fat as in cooking oils, supermarket salad dressings, fried foods, margarine, or anything like these. The people, who avoid brain diseases, and those who manage best with one of these diseases, are the folks who eat a diet that is extremely high in good dietary fats. These people require 80- to 90-percent of their total calories from fat!

So, if you are on a low-fat diet, and/or taking (cholesterol-lowering) drugs, and you are losing your memory, you now know why. These practices are particularly unhealthy for your brain. And eating lots of healthy fat is not unhealthy for your heart. Remarkably, the heart does not suffer on a good-fat diet. In fact, it even helps some folks recover from heart disease.

If you have or know children with epilepsy, help them get on a high-fat diet. An Atkins-type diet is best for these children. In some cases the kids were able to get off drugs after a few months on the diet. The same is true for almost every other brain disease.

Grandma was right. Fish is brain food. And fish fat and other healthy fats are good for your brain.

Quote of the week: *“The happiest people don’t necessarily have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything.”* – Unknown