

Walnuts Found to Improve Brain Performance

By Ethan A. Huff, Natural News

The key to a better memory, less brain fog and improved overall cognitive performance could be as simple as munching on a few tree nuts every day. Researchers from the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles, (UCLA) found that consuming less than a handful of walnuts daily, or about 13 grams, helped people of virtually all ages perform better on a series of six cognitive tests that looked at brain function.

The cross-sectional study, which drew from a large sampling of the U.S. population aged 20 years to 90 years, looked at a variety of cognitive factors including simple reaction time, symbol digit substitution, single digit learning, story recall and digit symbol substitution. Each of these performance evaluations was designed to collectively capture the participants' cognitive capacities.

Upon evaluation, it was determined that those who consumed just a few walnuts daily scored better on almost every metric. This was true in every age category, and the benefits were not confined to just one gender or ethnic category. Published in the *Journal of Nutrition, Health & Aging*, the findings are among the first to show walnut benefits in humans as opposed to just animals.

"It isn't every day that research results in such simple advice -- eating a handful of walnuts daily as a snack, or as part of a meal, can help improve your cognitive health," stated lead author Dr. Lenore Arab in a press release.

Walnuts contain unique omega-3 components not found in many other nuts

Walnuts have long been considered for their cognitive benefits, as they are rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids and other nutritive components. But it is their rich content of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a plant-based omega-3 with proven heart- and brain-health benefits -- ALA isn't found in substantial quantities in very many other nuts -- that researchers believe sets it apart.

Aging "baby-boomers" and those at risk of Alzheimer's and other debilitating brain conditions may benefit from regular walnut consumption, according to the findings, which were arrived at, at least in part, with funding from the California Walnut Commission. The overall brain benefits of walnuts appear to include a slowing of brain decline, which may help slow the aging process.

"It is exciting to see the strength of the evidence from this analysis across the U.S. population

supporting the previous results of animal studies that have shown the neuroprotective benefit from eating walnuts," added Dr. Arab, according to *CBS News*. "And it's a realistic amount -- less than a handful per day (13 grams)."

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are about 36 million people in the world today who suffer from dementia -- and this number is expected to not just double by 2030 but triple by 2050. It is thus more critical than ever that individuals take precautionary steps now to avoid becoming part of these harrowing statistics.

"There are numerous active ingredients in walnuts that may contribute to protecting cognitive functions," explains *CBS News*. "They are high in antioxidants and a combination of vitamins and minerals. A significant amount of alpha-linolenic acid, a plant-based omega-3 fatty acid in walnuts, also benefits heart and brain health."

More on the health benefits of walnuts is available in the *Natural News* archive: NaturalNews.com.

Sources:

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