Berry Brainy Food

Blueberries and strawberries are known for packing a nutritional punch. Turns out, they also boost your brain power.

September 5, 2012 By Courtney Balestier

Studies suggest berries may slow the progression of dementia, a mental condition in which people lose the ability to remember, think and plan, says registered dietitian and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson Joy Dubost.

Dark-colored berries in particular contain powerful phytochemicals such as flavonoids and anthocyanins. Scientists believe these compounds reduce inflammation and improve cell communication. This in turn boosts mental processes involved in learning, understanding and remembering. It also helps improve motor skills such as walking and writing.

“A good rule of thumb is: The darker the berry, the higher the anthocyanin content,” Dubost says. To reap benefits, just include a half cup of juicy berries in the five-cup serving of fruits and veggies nutritionists recommend we eat each day.

Dubost suggests enjoying berries mixed in smoothies, sprinkled in salads or swirled in Greek yogurt. That’s smart—and yummy!

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