ENHANCE BRAIN HEALTH WITH B12

An increased intake of B-complex vitamins has long been associated with a healthier brain and nervous system. A recent study published in the journal *Neurology* indicated that vitamin B12 may also protect older people against brain volume loss, reducing their risk of developing dementia.

The study conducted by researchers at Oxford University showed that people who had higher blood levels of vitamin B12 were six times less likely to experience brain shrinkage than those with lower levels of the vitamin.

Past research has shown that vitamin B12 deficiencies are common among the elderly, partly due to inadequate dietary intake. The absorption rate for vitamin B12 also decreases with age.

Vitamin B12 is found only in foods of animal origin such as meat, eggs, fish, and dairy. Vegans who don’t eat from these food groups and older people who may not be assimilating sufficient amounts of B12 could benefit from supplementation.

Sublingual tablets are known to have the best absorption rate. In cases where absorption is severely impaired, medically administered B12 injections have been shown to be beneficial. —S.G.

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**THE VERDICT IS IN: broccoli wins**

A growing body of research is confirming what mother always told us: broccoli is a nutritional powerhouse. Now it’s making headlines once again—a recent study in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* suggests that broccoli may have a protective effect on the lungs.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine found that sulforaphane, a compound in broccoli, “has been shown effective in restoring antioxidant gene activity.” This is especially significant for patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Along with sulforaphane and other powerful antioxidants, broccoli delivers many important nutrients such as vitamin C, beta carotene, vitamin E, folate, fibre, iron, phosphorus, and calcium. You can’t go wrong by including broccoli in your diet several times a week. Enjoy it as a lightly steamed side dish or add it to stir-fries, soups, and casseroles. Broccoli tastes especially delicious with melted cheese! —Simone Gabbay
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