Wellness Wednesday

LifeAdvisor.com

Ulliance
Enhancing People. Improving Business.

Find your path to total well-being!

The Best Snacks for Aging Well and Preventing Cognitive Decline, According to Nutrition Experts

Aging is a natural process that brings about various changes in our bodies and minds. As we age, the importance of maintaining our health becomes increasingly crucial. One effective strategy to combat the effects of aging is through mindful snacking. Nutrition plays a significant role in preserving our cognitive functions and overall well-being. We will explore some of the best snacks that can help you age gracefully while also preventing cognitive decline, as recommended by nutrition experts.

Understanding Aging and Its Effects

Aging is not merely a number; it encompasses a myriad of physiological changes that can impact our health. Two key processes associated with aging are cellular senescence and telomere shortening. Cellular senescence occurs when cells stop dividing and begin to produce harmful inflammatory substances. This can lead to various health issues, including chronic diseases and cognitive decline.

Telomeres, on the other hand, are protective caps at the ends of our chromosomes. As we age, these telomeres shorten, which is linked to a decline in cellular health and increased susceptibility to age-related diseases. Fortunately, lifestyle choices, particularly diet, can significantly influence these processes.

The Role of Nutrition in Aging

Nutrition plays a pivotal role in how we age. Certain foods can help mitigate the effects of cellular aging and support cognitive health. By incorporating nutrient-dense snacks into your daily routine, you can enhance your overall well-being and potentially reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

The Importance of Antioxidants

Antioxidants are compounds that help neutralize free radicals in our bodies, which can damage cells and accelerate aging. Foods rich in antioxidants can support cellular health and may even protect against cognitive decline. Berries, dark chocolate, and leafy greens are excellent sources of these beneficial compounds.

The Power of Healthy Fats

Healthy fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids, are essential for brain health. They help reduce inflammation and support cognitive function. Incorporating sources of healthy fats, like nuts, seeds, and fatty fish, into your snacks can be beneficial for both your brain and overall health.

Top Snacks for Aging Well

1. Colorful Raw Vegetables

Raw vegetables are a fantastic choice for a snack, packed with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants. They not only support digestive health but also help combat inflammation. Consider snacking on a variety of colorful veggies such as carrots, bell peppers, and cherry tomatoes.

- Benefits: High in antioxidants and fiber, low in calories.
- Serving Suggestions: Pair with hummus or a yogurt-based dip for added flavor.

2. Nutrient-Rich Boiled Eggs

Boiled eggs are a powerhouse of nutrition. They are rich in protein, vitamins, and essential fatty acids. Eggs contain choline, which is crucial for brain health, and lutein, which supports vision.

- Benefits: Simple to prepare, versatile, and highly nutritious.
- Serving Suggestions: Enjoy them plain, or slice them over a salad for added protein.

3. Decadent Dark Chocolate

Dark chocolate, particularly varieties with 70% cocoa or higher, is not just a treat but also a source of antioxidants and flavonoids. These compounds have been linked to improved heart health and cognitive function.

- Benefits: May enhance mood and cognitive performance.
- Serving Suggestions: Pair with nuts or berries for a delightful snack.

4. Whole Grain Goodness

Whole grains are essential for a balanced diet. They provide dietary fiber, B vitamins, and minerals. Snacks like whole-grain granola bars or air-popped popcorn can be satisfying and nutritious.

- Benefits: Supports digestive health and provides sustained energy.
- Serving Suggestions: Top popcorn with a sprinkle of nutritional yeast for a cheesy flavor.

5. Creamy Yogurt

Yogurt is a convenient and nutritious snack option. It contains probiotics, which support gut health and may enhance cognitive function. Additionally, yogurt is a good source of calcium and vitamin D.

- Benefits: Supports digestive health and bone strength.
- Serving Suggestions: Add fresh fruit or a drizzle of honey for added sweetness.

6. Fermented Foods

Incorporating fermented foods into your diet can be beneficial for gut health. Foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, and fermented pickles are rich in probiotics and may help balance your gut microbiome.

- Benefits: Supports digestive health and may enhance cognitive function.
- Serving Suggestions: Use as a topping for salads or as a side dish.

7. Dried and Smoked Fish

Dried fish, such as anchovies or sardines, is a popular snack in various cultures. These foods are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and protein, making them an excellent choice for supporting cognitive health.

- Benefits: High in calcium and protein, low in carbohydrates.
- Serving Suggestions: Enjoy them as is or add them to salads for a protein boost.

8. Seaweed Snacks

Nori and other sea vegetables are nutrient-dense snacks that provide essential minerals like iodine. They are low in calories and can be a great addition to your diet.

- Benefits: Rich in antioxidants and may help modulate aging pathways.
- Serving Suggestions: Snack on nori sheets or use them to make sushi rolls with vegetables.

9. Berries Galore
Berries are among the top foods for fighting inflammation. They are packed with antioxidants and are deliciously sweet. Incorporate a mix of strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries into your diet.
- Benefits: Supports cellular health and may improve memory.
- Serving Suggestions: Enjoy them fresh, frozen, or dried as a snack.

10. Nutty and Seedy Delights
Nuts and seeds are excellent sources of healthy fats, protein, and fiber. They have been shown to support brain health and may help prevent cognitive decline. Consider snacking on almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, or pumpkin seeds.
- Benefits: Rich in omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants.
- Serving Suggestions: Mix with dried fruit for a trail mix or sprinkle on yogurt.

11. Hydrating Fruits
Fruits with high water content, such as watermelon and oranges, are refreshing snacks that can help keep you hydrated. They are also rich in vitamins and antioxidants.
- Benefits: Hydration and nutrient-dense.
- Serving Suggestions: Enjoy as a standalone snack or blend into smoothies.

12. Herbal Teas
While not a traditional snack, herbal teas can provide numerous health benefits. They are often rich in antioxidants and can be a soothing addition to your diet.
- Benefits: Hydrating and may support cognitive function.
- Serving Suggestions: Enjoy hot or iced, with a splash of lemon for added flavor.

Embrace Healthy Snacking
Incorporating these nutrient-rich snacks into your daily routine can significantly impact your overall health and well-being as you age. By focusing on whole foods that are rich in antioxidants, healthy fats, and probiotics, you can support your body's natural aging processes and promote cognitive health. Remember, while snacks are essential, they should complement a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management. Embrace the power of nutrition to age gracefully and maintain cognitive vitality for years to come.

Fruit Pizza

A Colorful Dessert Delight

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all purpose unbleached flour, Gold Medal
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2/3 cup brown sugar, unpacked
1/4 cup melted unsalted butter
2 large egg whites
1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
2 tsp vanilla extract
2/3 cup white chocolate chips or chopped white chocolate

For the Frosting:

8 oz 1/3 less fat cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

To Assemble:

1 large mango, diced
3 diced kiwis
1 cup sliced strawberries
1 cup blueberries
1 cup raspberries

Fruit pizza is not just a dessert; it's a vibrant celebration of flavors and colors that can brighten any occasion. This delightful dish combines a sweet, cookie-like crust, a creamy frosting, and an array of fresh fruits, making it a healthier favorite among both children and adults.

The Origin of Fruit Pizza

The exact origins of fruit pizza are somewhat unclear, but it is believed to have emerged in the United States during the late 20th century. The dish gained popularity as a fun, visually appealing dessert that could be easily made for gatherings and parties. Its bright colors and refreshing taste made it a hit, especially during the warmer months.

Customizable for Every Taste

One of the best aspects of fruit pizza is its versatility. You can customize the crust, frosting, and toppings to suit your preferences. Whether you prefer tropical fruits like mango and pineapple or classic berries, the options are endless. This makes fruit pizza a great choice for accommodating dietary restrictions and personal tastes.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 bar, Calories: 140 kcal, Carbohydrates: 24 g, Protein: 2 g, Fat: 5 g, Saturated Fat: 1 g, Cholesterol: 10 mg, Sodium: 72 mg, Fiber: 1 g, Sugar: 17 g

INSTRUCTIONS

How to Make It

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 9 x 13 x 1.375 inch non-stick baking pan (quarter sheet pan) with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon and stir to blend.
3. In another bowl, whisk the sugars with the butter, egg whites, applesauce and vanilla until light and fluffy.
4. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients with a spatula in two additions until the batter is very well blended. If the batter looks more “crumbly” than smooth, add just a drop of water at a time (ONLY if needed) until it smooths out.
5. Fold in the white chocolate chips.
6. Spread the batter onto the baking pan using the back of a measuring cup to smooth evenly.
7. Bake 14 to 16 minutes, until the edges are golden and a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Don't over-bake or your bars will be dry. Let it cool completely before removing from the pan. Once cool transfer to a cutting board.
8. Meanwhile, prepare the frosting; in a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla until well-blended.
9. Cut the bars into 15 large squares (5 cuts by 3 cuts with the knife). Then cut each square in half diagonally to create triangles. Spread the frosting in a thin, even layer over the surface of the cookie, leaving a small margin around the edges. Layer the fresh fruit over the frosting.
10. Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Reference: SkinnyTaste

https://www.self.com/story/how-to-do-crunches

Featured Exercise ► Alternating Toe Touch Crunch

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Lie faceup with your legs extended straight up to the ceiling, feet flexed.

2. Crunch up, reaching your fingertips toward your flexed toes. Engage your core and focus on keeping your low back pressed into the floor (you're not lifting your hips, you're only lifting your shoulders and upper back off the floor).

3. Return to starting position and repeat, leaving legs in the same place throughout the move.

Click here to view online!

THE BENEFITS:

The Alternating Toe Touch Crunch is a highly effective exercise that targets the core, particularly the abdominal muscles and obliques, while also engaging secondary muscles such as the hip flexors and quadriceps. This exercise is suitable for individuals at various fitness levels, especially beginners looking to enhance their strength and stability.

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

Meet Ulliance Senior Wellness Account Manager