

## **Health Advice # 17 Eating to Boost Your Brainpower**



Eat well, think well: It turns out that the Romans were definitely on the right track with their famous saying "*mens sana in corpore sano*" (a healthy mind in a healthy body). Athletes have followed this dictum for centuries, and today scientists are finding that if you keep your body supplied with a wide assortment of healthy foods and nutrients, it may indeed enhance your ability to maintain that "healthy mind" as you age. As your brain ages, important nerve cells are less able to protect themselves against highly reactive rogue compounds called free radicals. Every cell in your body manufactures thousands of these unstable oxygen molecules every day, and you are also exposed to them in the world around you — through tobacco smoke, pollution, and even ultraviolet radiation. Left unchecked, free radicals damage cells (a process called oxidative stress) and also contribute to age-related degenerative diseases, including mental decline. Fortunately, the body has a natural defense system to protect itself against oxidative stress: antioxidants. These substances, which help shield the body from the actions of free radicals, include well-known nutrients like vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, and selenium, and they are widely available in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains.

**To your health! Anima Sana in Corpore Sano (a healthy mind in a healthy body)**

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