

# June 2018: Eating for Brain Health

Posted on July 2, 2018 | In [Nutrition](#)

*My family has a history of Alzheimer's Disease. I've read about different diets that can help reduce the risk. What are they and do they work?*

A healthy diet is certainly a good place to start in the prevention of many conditions, and brain health is no exception. While there's no single diet that is proven to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's, there is promising information about dietary approaches that may help brain function in indirect ways.

What's key is reducing the risk of other conditions that can contribute to a decline in cognitive function. Cardiac disease and high blood pressure are both linked to a deterioration in blood vessels, including blood vessels in the brain, which increases the risk of Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Eating to protect your heart and lower your blood pressure can have the added benefit of lessening risk factors associated with cognitive decline. Diets that reduce cholesterol and inflammation can also contribute to a reduced risk for Alzheimer's, again because they can reduce your risk for heart disease.

There are three eating styles that show promise in protecting heart health and reducing blood pressure, and therefore may improve brain health, as well. They are the Mediterranean Diet, the DASH Diet, and the Mind Diet. These diets all have some elements in common and it's smart to consider incorporating these into your diet:

## Up This

- Foods high in monounsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids, such as olives, ground flaxseed, cold water fish and nuts
- Fruits and vegetables, particularly green, leafy vegetables
- Whole grains and beans (legumes)
- Lean meat and occasional low-fat dairy foods

## Reduce That

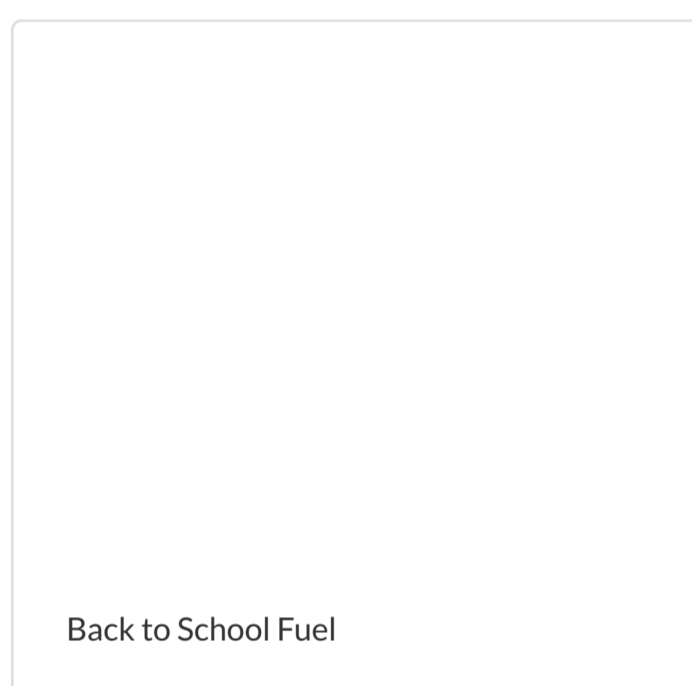
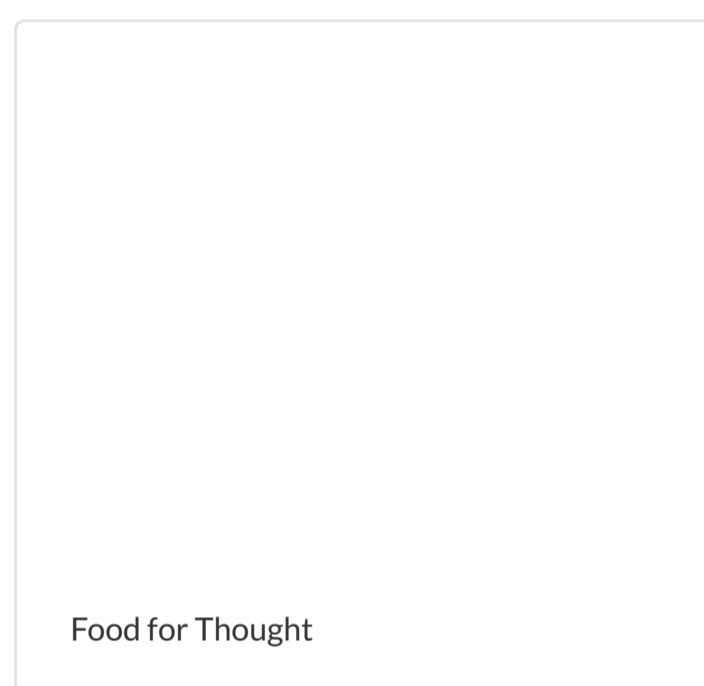
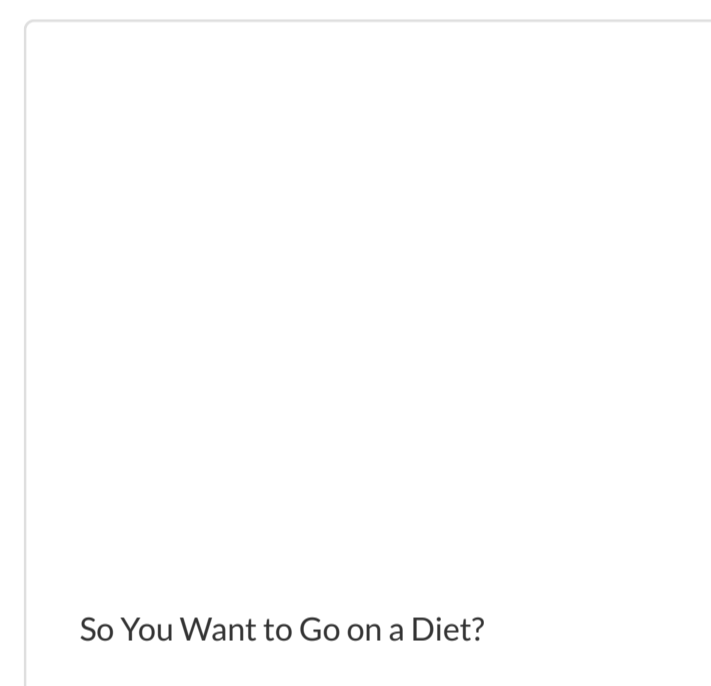
- Sugar – including honey, syrup, agave and other “natural” forms of sugar
- Artificial sweeteners – including Stevia, Splenda, Sweet 'N Low, Equal and sugar alcohols
- Processed carbohydrates, such as those made with white flour
- High-fat dairy products
- High-fat and processed meats, such as deli meats and bacon
- Alcohol

Although there's no sure-fire way to completely prevent or reverse Alzheimer's, improving your overall health through diet is certainly food for thought.

*If you want to discuss dietary approaches to prevent and manage specific diseases, feel free to contact me for a private consultation at 203-438-5555.*



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