

“Malnutrition due to misinformation”

Don't let the headlines fool you... you NEED these key dietary components for optimum health

It's truly disheartening how poorly many of us eat.

Take America, for instance. There's a reason why the Standard American Diet is abbreviated as SAD.

And young females, in particular, are actually one of the most malnourished segments of the global population. (Though, in my view, the same can be said for our vulnerable seniors.)

In fact, research shows that girls ages 11 to 18 often don't get enough key nutrients, including vitamins and minerals.

Why? Many simply don't eat enough. They also tend to be more susceptible to pressure from their peers to follow unbalanced, fad diets. (I'll tell you more about that in a moment.)

But the truth is, both women and men—of *any* age—can have nutrient imbalances for any number of reasons.

And I recently came across new research that illuminated a key driving factor behind this problem.

I call it: “Malnutrition due to misinformation.”

Specifically, misinformation about the importance of **key dietary components**. Components that should ALWAYS be part of a healthy,

balanced diet in order to achieve optimum health, no matter what the headlines read.

Let's take a closer look...

The effects of poor nutrition

For those of you with young granddaughters especially, pay close attention to the following statistics. Because this “misinformation campaign” starts at a much younger age than you may realize.

According to Ian Givens, a professor of food and nutrition at Reading University and director of the U.K. Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, a whopping *50 percent* of British females between the ages of 11 and 18 consume less than the minimum recommended levels of dietary iron and magnesium.¹

Another 25 percent of these girls get too little dietary calcium, iodine, and zinc.

Dr. Givens said these young women may be more susceptible to (false) messages about how **meat** and **dairy** products are “bad” for the environment.

As a result, those who are still growing and maturing are becoming vegetarian or vegan—and quite frankly, it's having serious health consequences.

In fact, the teenage years are crucial for bone development. And, of course, magnesium and calcium are both critical in that process. (For more about the health benefits of magnesium, see page 5.)

So, girls who don't get those nutrients from animal proteins are susceptible to bone health issues throughout their entire lives—and especially after they reach menopause.

Of course, men can also face health consequences due to poor dietary

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Dr. Micozzi's *Insiders' Cures* is published monthly by OmniVista Health Media, L.L.C., 1117 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202 for \$74 per year (\$6.16 an issue).

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Insiders' Cures*, 1117 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

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 Publisher: Katherine Wheeler
 Editorial Director: Rachel Lewis

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choices as they age. That's why men *and* women, from young to old, should heed my next warning as well. Because seniors are being misled by misinformation, too...

Animal protein is essential for health

A recent study, called InCHIANTI, involved just over 1,100 men and women, with an average age of 75 years, living in Tuscany, Italy.

Researchers followed the participants for 20 years and assessed their clinical and dietary information a total of five times.²

This included analyzing how much protein they ate from either plant or animal sources. Then, statistical models assessed the association between protein intake and mortality.

During the follow-up period, there were 811 deaths, including 292 cardiovascular cases and 151 cancer cases.

The good news? Results showed that the subjects who ate **more animal protein**—which includes meat and dairy—had *lower all-cause mortality rates*. They also had lower rates of dying from cardiovascular disease.

Meanwhile, people who ate more plant protein *didn't* have improved mortality outcomes. Which isn't at all surprising.

For one thing, animal products (like meat, fish, dairy, and eggs) are sources of *complete* protein. Meaning they contain all of the amino acids that our bodies need, yet can't produce on their own.

Plant proteins, on the other hand, are *incomplete* proteins. Meaning they lack some of those key amino acids, which can affect the function of every cell in your body (and could even leave you malnourished in the long run).

Other benefits to animal protein

Animal proteins also contain essential nutrients that aren't found in plant proteins.

Beef, for instance, is a key source of B vitamins. That's a big reason why vegetarians and vegans are advised to supplement with vitamin B—because they're simply *not* getting it from their diet.

Beef is also rich in iron (which should only come from your diet, not supplements), magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, and zinc.

Dairy is a good source of these vitamins and minerals as well. Plus, it's a key source of calcium (which, like iron, should only come from your diet, not supplements).

Of course, plant sources like nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, peas, and leafy greens contain key nutrients, too. That's why I recommend you eat *both* kinds of foods for optimum health.

But there is one caveat: You must consume both types of proteins *in their natural forms*. In other words, steer clear of fake meats (and other overly processed, "Frankenfoods")...

A disturbing willingness to eat "fake meat"

In a survey conducted in December 2021 by the U.K. Food Standards Agency (FSA), more than one-third of the respondents said they'd be willing to try meat produced in a laboratory—even though the science is *lacking*.³

The survey involved 1,930 adults. And for those who said they were *unwilling* to try lab-grown "meat," 27 percent said they could be persuaded if they knew it was safe to eat. Another 23 percent said they might eat it if they could trust it was properly regulated.

Meanwhile, about 60 percent of respondents were willing to add plant-based proteins to their diets—but there was still a big, overarching preference for traditional meats.

The FSA said these findings indicate how important the safe and proper regulation of food is to consumers. But I have another perspective...

Food innovation without food science

The problem is that some of these fake and ultra-processed “meats” stretch the boundaries, dimensions, and knowledge of food science.

And yet, the fake meat advocates push for what they call “food innovation,” with the mantra of benefitting health, the environment, and the economy.

(Even though the carbon footprint is HUGE for putting together multiple artificial, processed ingredients to make fake meats. How is that improving the environment... or the economy?)

Worse yet, the development of fake meat is being done without real science. Hurling into the unknown—after eons of human experience eating REAL foods. (Although, you'd never know by reading the headlines, which often scapegoat natural food sources, like meat.)

And now, there's another approach to artificial meat production that also appears fraught with peril.

It's known as “cell-cultured meat,” and here's why I'm concerned...

Just say “no” to stem-cell steaks

Basically, cell-cultured meat is created from stem cells grown from the muscle, fat, and connective tissues of real meat.

The idea is to create “fake meat”

that's supposedly better for human health and the health of the planet.

Fortunately, this “meat” hasn't made it out of the lab and into the grocery store. But even if the promised technology isn't currently available to consumers, it likely will be in the future.

And that's frightening.

For one, in the cell-cultured meat “culture,” the business leaders often aren't scientists... or nutritionists.

That makes me wonder: If the lab runs into any problems developing cell-cultured meat, will those CEOs even listen? Or will they simply plow ahead?

(Even worse, are the CEOs hiring scientists who even know what they're doing?!)

Plus, there are reports of at least one cell-cultured meat company raising hundreds of millions of dollars from investors.

But will that influence the science behind the “product?” Will these investors overlook what *really* should matter—the truth of the science and the impact on human health? Or will they solely be focused on return on investment? (I have my guess!)

Of course, there's also a problem with the actual contents of this cell-cultured “meat.”

Some companies are using the old trick of claiming ingredient “trade secrets.” For instance, when asked about their growth medium for culturing cells (how they're able to grow meat cells in test tubes), they reply, “it's proprietary.”

But when it comes to our food, diet, and dietary supplements, consumers have a right and expectation of transparency—to know exactly what they're consuming, and that it's safe

and properly regulated.

After all, isn't that what the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) required good manufacturing processes are all about?

That's why I suggest leaving the cultured cells, petri dishes, and test tubes to grow germs and microbes—not fake meat.

Because the raw truth is... NONE of this is necessary when you have adequate REAL, healthful meat available.

The only message you really need


The bottom line is that eating a balanced diet of whole, natural foods is best for your health. That includes adequate amounts of REAL meat, dairy, and other animal proteins—as well as REAL, fresh plant proteins.

Otherwise, you may suffer from malnutrition due to misinformation. Especially when it comes to the importance of animal proteins in the diet.

So, the next time you encounter an anti-meat or fake-meat aficionado, I suggest you replace their misguided messages with an old advertising slogan...

“Where's the beef” (and dairy) when it comes to healthy diets?

Then, as always, strive to follow a Mediterranean-type diet. This includes grass-fed and -finished meat, wild-caught fish and seafood, full-fat dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds, nuts, beans (legumes), olive oil, and even wine (in moderation).

Even better, teach your grandchildren to do the same, starting at a young age. As a result, your health—and their health—will soar, rather than be inhibited, for years to come. 

Sugar and carbs PROTECT AGAINST diabetes and disease?!

Important distinctions you need to know

People who are struggling with Type II diabetes and weight gain are often encouraged by mainstream doctors and nutritionists to limit carbohydrate intake—mainly, sugar. But there's a major FLAW in their approach...

Instead of encouraging natural, whole foods, these practitioners push artificial sweeteners and “sugar-free” candy, cakes, and cookies.

Even though studies consistently show that these “Frankenfoods” can actually *lead to* obesity, diabetes, and other serious disease.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating that you eat the full-sugar versions of processed baked goods. Refined sugar (along with processed foods) is the *single largest contributor* to an unhealthy diet and onset of chronic diseases.

I'm simply explaining that *not all sugars* are created equal. In fact, the sugar that naturally occurs in some food—and one food group, in particular—can actually help PROTECT AGAINST chronic disease...not cause it. *That's* what these mainstream “experts” should be explaining... and encouraging.

But since that's not the usual case, I'll outline for you what you can—and SHOULD—be eating. As well as how the food works in your body. I'll also share why I recommend you eat at least two servings of this *naturally* sweet (and delicious!) whole food every single day...

Fruits are essential to good health

Fruits are loaded with nutrients that

the body can't naturally make by itself (and therefore, needs to get from food). So if you completely avoid—or severely restrict—fruit, your body will suffer.

In fact, when consumed on a daily basis, fruits supply fiber, minerals, vitamins, antioxidant plant compounds called phytonutrients, and yes—some carbohydrates.

These components are vital to good health, including carbohydrates.

Here's why, despite their bad reputation, a balanced diet NEEDS to contain some carbs...

The case for carbs

Carbs, along with fats and proteins, are considered macronutrients. Unlike micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals, macronutrients are major

nutrients that the body needs in larger (“macro”) amounts every day.

That's why eliminating any kind of macronutrient (like carbs) often leads to nutrient deficiencies...and ultimately, chronic diseases.

Of course, carbohydrates are essentially built from chains of glucose (the blood sugar that comes from sugars found in foods).

These sugars can be natural, like fructose (from fruit) and lactose (from milk). Or the sugar can be processed and refined, like sucrose (found in popular “fat-free” and artificial foods).

Then, glucose is used to make energy in the body's cells. This energy helps facilitate metabolic reactions throughout the body and brain.

The rise of processed sugar—and how to spot it

Despite its omnipresence today, processed sugar is a relatively recent part of the human diet.

Sugar cane is thought to have originated in New Guinea. But by 1000 B.C., it was also being cultivated in parts of Asia. The cane was initially chewed, until farmers in India discovered they could crush them, extract the juices, boil them, and create refined, crystalized sugar.

Arab traders later exported sugar and sugar cane to northern Africa. There are even records of the ancient Greeks and Romans using some sugar cane—but as a medicine rather than a food.

During the Middle Ages, European explorers brought sugar from Asia and Africa home with them. It was considered so valuable that it was locked up and traded like a commodity.

Then, when European countries

established colonies in the Americas in the 1500s, sugar cane became a popular and profitable crop—and a staple of the human diet.

Fast forward to the early 1970s, and “high fructose corn syrup” was also introduced to our diet.

(This a bit of a misnomer since corn syrup normally does not contain fructose. Instead, processed fructose is artificially added to the corn syrup so it can be called “high” in fructose, relatively speaking, compared to no fructose at all.)

But make no mistake—supposedly “high fructose” corn syrup is still artificial, refined sugar.

And satisfying a desire for a sweet taste by eating foods that contain ANY type of refined sugar is a recipe for dietary disaster.

In fact, glucose is so important for every cell in your body that if you *don't* get any sugar from carbs, your liver starts changing some proteins into glucose. (When this happens, your body will lose important tissues.)

In extreme cases, your body may start to break down muscle mass to convert protein into glucose for the cells. (Retaining muscle mass is hard enough for aging adults and directly contributes to longevity.)

In nature, carbohydrates are found in **fruits**, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and whole grains. Fruits are important because humans have evolved with a desire to eat sweet-tasting foods to obtain the nutrients needed to survive.

But there's a world of difference between the natural sugars fruits contain and the refined sugars found in processed foods.

The sweet (and not so sweet) differences

Fruit sugars can be part glucose as well as fructose. As I mentioned earlier, both of these natural sugars provide carbohydrates, just like refined sugar (sucrose).

But refined sugar is a highly concentrated form of carbohydrates.

While it *can* come from some plants (like sugar cane), its plant nutrients are removed during manufacturing processes. And that makes a HUGE difference in how the sugar is metabolized in the body!

When you eat whole fruit, on the other hand, the fructose is taken in as part of the natural biomatrix. So you get the fructose, but you also get plenty of fiber.

The fiber slows the absorption of

fructose from the intestines, primarily because it makes the contents thicker. This allows the sugar to “trickle” into the bloodstream.

But sucrose and other refined sugars don't have that “trickle down” effect. They hit the bloodstream immediately, causing sugar spikes that can lead to obesity, Type II diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

This excess sugar in the bloodstream can also combine with proteins and fats in other foods. This creates toxic substances that are associated with a wide range of chronic health problems, including diabetes and heart disease.

The real causes of diabetes

Of course, we typically associate Type II diabetes with excess sugar consumption. But many people,

Mineral of the Month: Magnesium (Plus, some big news about blood pressure)

Magnesium is the fourth-most abundant mineral in our bodies. It is essential for hundreds of metabolic processes.

It's so essential, in fact, that magnesium deficiency has been linked to a number of chronic health conditions.

Adequate stores of magnesium play a crucial role in insulin and glucose metabolism. It can even reduce your risk of Type II diabetes.

Not to mention, magnesium is important for muscle and nerve health. It can also help reduce stress and promote restful sleep.

But perhaps some of the most intriguing benefits of magnesium relates to heart health...

In fact, magnesium's role in reducing blood pressure—one of the major risk factors for heart disease—has been validated by mainstream scientific standards.

The evidence is SO convincing that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a qualified health claim in January of this year about the ability of magnesium supplements to lower

blood pressure.

Since the FDA is highly reluctant (to put it mildly) to issue these types of health claims for supplements, that's very big news.

Magnesium is thought to lower blood pressure by competing with calcium to reduce the contractions of blood vessels. (These contractions are what raise blood pressure.)

Some blood pressure drugs work in a similar way. But, of course, magnesium has the benefit of lowering blood pressure safely and naturally—without the nasty side effects of pharmaceutical drugs.

Magnesium may also help balance the sympathetic nervous system, ultimately helping to regulate blood pressure.

But sadly, research shows that the majority of Americans don't get enough of this key mineral.

The good news is that there are a variety of ways you can BOOST your magnesium levels and IMPROVE your health...

- Magnesium is present in seawater and can be absorbed through the skin.

So, when you can—swim in natural bodies of water to increase magnesium absorption. It's an enjoyable form of exercise. Plus, you'll get healthy sun exposure.

- Magnesium is the main ingredient in Epsom salts. Meaning it can also be absorbed in bathwater or in a footbath. (What a great form of relaxation!)
- Magnesium is abundant in leafy greens, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, seafood, and even cacao (see page 8). All of which make up the healthy, Mediterranean-type diet that I always recommend.
- Magnesium is widely available in supplement form. I recommend 400 mg of magnesium per day. I find magnesium citrate to be the best; however, the key is to avoid magnesium glutamate, aspartate, and oxide.

For all of my natural approaches to heart health (and healthy blood pressure), check out my *Heart Attack Prevention and Repair Protocol*. To learn more about this comprehensive, online learning tool, or to enroll today, [click here](#) or call 1-866-747-9421 and ask for order code EO3Y400.

including many health professionals, don't fully appreciate the real causes of diabetes.

In fact, some science suggests that Type II diabetes occurs when there's a loss of function in the pancreas' beta cells—which are responsible for producing insulin. This insulin helps move sugar away from your blood and into your cells, where it's needed.

(And now, a new finding—described in my next article below—demonstrates how FAT helps the beta cells in the pancreas do their work.)

Plus, the nutrients found in fruits help protect these pancreatic cells. In fact,

research has found that people who eat the MOST fruit actually have the LOWEST risk of Type II diabetes.

How to get your daily fruit intake


To sum everything up, if you bypass fruits because of misinformed dietary advice, it becomes more difficult to get all of the nutrients (and the right carbs!) you need each day.

That's why the most sensible—and effective—approach for good health is to follow a healthy, balanced diet.

And, as I've written before, the newest research shows a balanced

diet should strive to include two servings (or about two cups) of fruit a day. Which is easily attainable.

I like to include fresh berries in my full-fat, plain yogurt. Toss sliced apples or pears in salads. Braise or poach stone fruits (like apricots, cherries, and peaches) with beef, pork, or lamb. And simply enjoy *any* kind of fruit as a naturally sweet and delicious dessert.

In fact, when you cut out refined sugar from your daily diet, your taste buds adapt—and before long, you're able to appreciate the natural, healthy sweetness of fruits. 

END diabetes risk with this (unfairly) demonized food

A new study found that another long-demonized dietary food component *doesn't* increase your risk of Type II diabetes.

In fact, yet again, it may play a protective role against this metabolic disorder. What's more, you simply cannot live (let alone THRIVE) without it.

It was an unexpected, shocking finding for many. But not for those who follow the latest science.

I'll tell you more about this exciting research in just a moment. But first, let's look at how this food component became an unfair culprit blamed for diabetes and other chronic disease.

The phobia against fat

As you know, there's been a campaign against **fats**. What I call the “anti-fat” narrative has been repeated for decades by the mainstream medical establishment.

But it's all ridiculous. As I discuss

on page 4, fat, along with protein and carbohydrates, is an essential macronutrient involved in every process in your body and brain.

In other words, you NEED it.

But as metabolic disorders like obesity and Type II diabetes have become commonplace in the Western world, fat has been forced to take part of the blame.

The issue has to do with the mechanism of Type II diabetes. In essence, the disease is a result of poor function of beta cells in the pancreas. These cells make insulin and release it into the blood. Also, in adults, tissues may become “resistant” to insulin. Too much sugar stays in the blood, putting more demands on the pancreas.

When the pancreatic cells don't work sufficiently, it causes problems for the normal regulation of blood sugar levels. Leading potentially to diabetes, as well as problems for the eyes, heart, nerves, and kidneys.

Back in the 1970s, some scientists theorized that fat could be singled out as the problem. The idea was that fats from the diet ended up in the blood, exposed the pancreatic cells to toxicity, and caused their deterioration.

So, we were told by so-called health “experts” to cut down or eliminate fat from our diets. That led to people substituting sugar and carbs (mainly from processed foods) for fats, in many cases.

(Remember all of those circa 1980s low-fat, artificially sweetened cakes and cookies touted as “good for you”? When in reality, they couldn't be *worse* for your health.)

Of course, research really shows that excess sugar is responsible for stressing and damaging pancreatic cells—contributing to Type II diabetes.

(That's why I find it surprising that some medical organizations still have so much to say about fats,

cholesterol, salt, and other dietary factors. Yet don't say enough about avoiding refined, processed, and packaged foods that contain artificial sugar, like breakfast cereals...which somehow get the "seal of approval" from mainstream medicine.)

Uncovering the cellular mechanisms of fat in the pancreas

The good news is that there's no longer any doubt about the role of sugar consumption in Type II diabetes (see page 5). Yet, somehow the idea that fat is still a factor has remained in limbo.

Which leads me to the new study I mentioned earlier...

Scientists from the University of Geneva, Switzerland, investigated how both pancreatic beta cells in humans and animals respond and adapt to excess sugar and fat in the bloodstream.¹

They found that when these cells are exposed to fat they actually have *less* difficulty doing their jobs, and less problems with excess sugar.

The researchers began by exposing the beta cells—some to an overabundance of sugar, some to an overabundance of fat, and some to a combination of both.

Results showed that the cells exposed to high sugar created and released much less insulin than normal. But when the cells were exposed to both too much sugar and too much fat, the cells stored the fat in the form of droplets.

The researchers believe pancreatic beta cells are biologically programmed to store extra fat in anticipation of "lean" times, when food may be less abundant.

But that's not all...

Their research also revealed that fat acts as the center of an active cycle of both storage and release. Because of the release of these fat molecules, pancreatic beta cells are able to handle excess sugar.

The researchers also discovered that the fat allows the cells to maintain *nearly normal* insulin secretion—and, thus, normal blood sugar levels.

Therefore, the researchers concluded, to lower your risk of Type II diabetes, the body needs to undergo this cycle of fat storage and release.


Chewing the fat

The Swiss scientists aren't sure how the released fat stimulates the storage of insulin, so they're investigating further.

But in the meantime, the conclusions from this study show that eating dietary fat is not only necessary for our daily existence...

It's also key in helping prevent chronic diseases like Type II diabetes.

That's why I recommend you get healthy, natural fat in your daily diet. Good sources include:

- Organic, grass-fed and -finished beef and lamb
- Wild-caught, fatty fish (like salmon)
- Full-fat dairy (such as butter, cheese, milk, and yogurt)
- Nuts and seeds
- Olive oil 

A handful of strawberries per day might keep the doctor away

Back in the 1980s, there was a popular idea that beta-carotene consumption was the answer to cancer.

I warned (and published a study) showing that the evidence was not really there to back up that theory. But the National Cancer Institute plowed ahead, putting lots of research into chasing this idea.

I remember one early study from Harvard that found eating fresh strawberries year-round was a major

factor in reducing the risk of certain cancers.

I pointed out their whole finding was based on a faulty premise. Mainly because strawberries don't actually contain the carotenoids as the researchers thought.

However, we've since discovered that strawberries have many OTHER health benefits. Including one that's particularly important for aging women...

The link between strawberries and strong bones

Strawberries are high in vitamin C, manganese, potassium, and fiber. They're also rich in polyphenols, which have been linked to heart health and blood pressure management.

Now, a new study shows that strawberries' ability to lower blood pressure in older women can also help improve bone health.¹ (This makes

sense since high blood pressure can raise your risk of osteoporosis.)

The study involved 60 postmenopausal women with high blood pressure. The women were divided into three groups...

One group consumed 25 grams (g) of strawberry powder daily (the equivalent of 1.5 cups of fresh strawberries). One group consumed 50 grams of strawberry powder daily (the equivalent of 3 cups of fresh strawberries). And one group didn't eat any strawberries.

After eight weeks, the researchers evaluated the women's blood pressure levels. They found that blood pressure and arterial stiffness improved in the first (25 g) strawberry group, over time.

Plus, a later analysis showed that the strawberry eaters had a noticeable improvement in bone health markers, too.

The researchers measured a factor in the blood called osteocalcin, which is associated with bone formation. They also analyzed another factor called adiponectin, which is associated with bone-mineral density. And they measured IGF-1 (insulin-like growth factor 1), a critical marker of bone health.

Results showed the group that consumed the higher amount of strawberry powder (50 grams daily) had better indicators of bone formation (osteocalcin). Bone-mineral density was better in both of the strawberry groups, but declined in the placebo group. And the 25 g strawberry group had a statistically significant increase in IGF-1.

The little berry that works fast

These are remarkable results for a study that was only eight weeks long.

Alterations in bone-mineral density are a slow-moving process. It can take years to show significant

improvements. So, to accomplish this in less than two months highlights an important link between strawberries and bone health—especially in postmenopausal women.

Plus, including fresh strawberries in your diet will help you reach your goal of five fruits and vegetables per day—which is the cornerstone of a healthy, balanced diet. BUT—I must also note that it's imperative to only eat **organic strawberries**.

Strawberries are one of the fruits that can be highly contaminated with pesticides, herbicides, and other agricultural chemicals. The seeds on the outside of the skin can trap contaminants inside the pores (and “under the skin”, so to speak).

Bottom line: If you want *berry* good health, make sure to include at least 1.5 cups of organic strawberries in your daily diet...year-round. **LC**

Citations for all articles available online at www.DrMicozzi.com

NEWS BRIEF

This dynamic duo benefits your taste buds and your brain

Many things in life go better together. Like grilled cheese and tomato soup. Beer and baseball. Sunshine and a good book.

And now, a new study has found that a combination of two healthy (and tasty) foods—that I regularly enjoy—can improve your brain health.¹

I'm talking about chocolate and berries.

The study involved 60 men and women, ages 50 to 75. They were randomly assigned to consume dried berries, cocoa powder, or a combination of both every day for 12 weeks.

The berry mixture contained dried red and black currants, raspberries, and blueberries. This mixture provided a daily intake of milligrams (mg) of anthocyanins—a type of antioxidant found in plants (particularly berries).

The cocoa group consumed 100 grams (g) daily (1 tablespoon) of cocoa powder,

which provided 200 mg of flavanols (another type of antioxidant found in plants).

The researchers measured markers of brain health and cognitive activity in all of the participants both before and after the study. The participants also underwent a number of cognitive-function tests.

At the end of the study, participants who consumed either berries or cocoa showed improvements on their cognitive tests. But the improvements were most pronounced in the group that consumed BOTH cocoa and berries.

The researchers believe the anthocyanins in berries and the flavanols in cocoa work together in several ways to influence brain health, protect brain cells, and support cognitive function.

First, they think anthocyanins and flavanols promote those brain cells that are directly involved with forming and

retaining memories.

Plus, the consumption of whole foods rich in flavanols improves various important brain functions. These foods have been shown to boost insulin sensitivity, blood sugar regulation, and blood flow to the brain—all of which improve brain performance.

That's why I recommend including both berries and dark chocolate (with at least 70 percent cacao) in your diet.

Strawberries are an excellent choice to satisfy this recommendation, as I discuss above. Another good option is blueberry powder (together with other healthy ingredients like rose hips and baobab). That's because, along with this study, other studies show blueberries can improve both short-term and long-term cognitive function and memory. You can even add fresh strawberries, blueberries, and cocoa powder to a serving of full-fat, plain yogurt (as I sometimes do).