



HEALTHY MIND

Exercise Your Brain

Keeping Your Mind Sharp at Any Age

When was the last time you headed towards the workroom but couldn't remember why you were going there in the first place? Memory lapses can occur at any age, according to *The Harvard Health Publications*, but the aging process isn't the only contributing cause to the cognitive decline. In fact, significant memory loss in older people can be attributed to gradual aging, brain injury or neurological ailment.

The Harvard Health Publications offers these few strategies to protect and keep your mind sharp:

1. **Engage in life-long learning** – Whether it means enrolling in an educational course or pursuing a new hobby, the key to keeping your memory strong is by staying mentally active.
2. **Use all five senses** – The more senses that are involved in the learning process, the more your brain is involved in retaining the memory. You will likely remember something more effectively if you were able to see, smell and touch it as opposed to just seeing it.

3. **Prioritize your brain use** – For routine information such as birthdays and dentist appointments, rely on calendars and planners so you can allocate your mental energy on learning and remembering new and important things.
4. **Repeat, repeat, repeat** – It is important to repeat the new information either by repeating it verbally or writing it down. This reinforces the memory and/or connection.
5. **Space it out** – Timing is equally as important as repetition when it comes to learning something new, such as a different work assignment. It is not effective to repeat something in a short of period time. Instead, space out the timing so that you revisit the new information once an hour, then every few hours, then every day.



HEALTHY LIVING

Spring Cleaning

How to Clean Your Home Without Harming Your Health

Spring is just around the corner and for some, the urge to clean is on the rise. Spring cleaning is about keeping a healthy home, free of dirt, germs, stains and foul smells. However, before you clean, you should know that some common household cleaning products contain toxic chemicals that can cause serious harm to your health.

Although hazard symbols and warning words like, “poison”, “corrosive”, and “irritant” are printed on the labels of commercial cleaning products, the David Suzuki Foundation warns that there is no requirement in Canada for manufacturers to caution consumers about the health and environmental hazards associated with chronic, or long-term, exposure to chemical ingredients in these household products.

Fortunately, there are safer alternatives to potential harmful cleaning products which can be made at home. *Canadian Living* offers a few recipes that you can try:

All-purpose cleaner

- Combine vinegar and salt for a good surface cleaner.
- Pour some baking soda and vinegar on a damp sponge to clean and deodorize all kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Oven cleaner

- Pour salt on the grimy areas while the oven is still warm or dampen with water before applying salt if the area is dry. When the oven cools down, scrape the grime off and wash clean.

Toilet bowl cleaner and deodorizer

- Sprinkle baking soda into the bowl, then drizzle vinegar in it before scouring with a toilet brush. Remember not to mix the combination with store-bought toilet cleaners as it will create toxic fumes.

Glass cleaner

- Mix equal amounts of water and vinegar in a spray

bottle, then wipe the glass with newspaper or cotton cloth.

Natural deodorizer

- Boil 1 tablespoon of vinegar in 1 cup of water to eliminate unpleasant cooking odours.
- Put a box of baking soda in the corner of the refrigerator to absorb odours.

Marks, scratches and stain removers

- Rub toothpaste on a damp cloth to remove crayon marks on the floor or table. Don't use this on wallpaper or porous surfaces.
- Pour salt immediately on grease spots to absorb and prevent staining.
- Mix equal parts of lemon juice and vegetable oil and rub against scratches with a soft cloth until they disappear.



HEALTHY HEART

Nutrition for the Heart

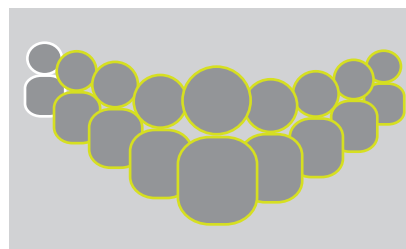
Some of the Best Foods for Your Heart

Did you know that 9 in 10 Canadians (90%) have at least one risk factor (smoking, alcohol, physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes) for heart disease or stroke (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009)?

Risk factors aside, we do know that healthy eating plays a vital role in the prevention of heart disease and stroke.

Carol Dombrow, a registered dietitian and a nutrition consultant for The Heart and Stroke Foundations of Ontario and Canada, recommends the following heart-smart food choices:

- **Fish** – “Oily fish”, such as salmon, herring, mackerel, tuna, sardines and trout are all full of omega-3 fatty acids, which may help lower blood pressure and protect against heart disease. Since our bodies cannot produce this kind of fat, we need to eat foods that contain it.
- **Flaxseed** – Containing both soluble and insoluble types of fibre, flaxseeds are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids which have been shown to have heart-healthy effects.
- **Colourful foods** – All fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that may help prevent heart disease, cancer and other illnesses. To get all the various nutrients, pick different-coloured fruits and vegetables. For example, vegetables like broccoli, red peppers and carrots, and fruits like tomatoes, oranges, kiwi and strawberries are heart-healthy choices. Remember to eat the skins for added fibre, and steam the vegetables to preserve the most nutrients.
- **Legumes** – Not only are legumes a good source of protein and a healthy substitute for meat, legumes are typically low in fat, contain no cholesterol, and are high in folate, potassium, iron and magnesium. Black beans, chickpeas and kidney beans, for example, can help lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol.
- **Nuts** – Aside from being a good source of protein, most nuts contain at least some heart-healthy substances, such as omega-3 fatty acids, fibre, unsaturated fats, and vitamin E, to help reduce the risk of blood clots and improve the health of arterial linings. Almonds, pistachios, cashews and walnuts are good choices.



Nine of out 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease or stroke.

TRG
GROUP BENEFITS

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009

With all this talk about food, why not try this heart-smart recipe, courtesy of The Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Grilled salmon with red pepper and edamame

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 mL) frozen edamame beans (Japanese soybeans)
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) water
- 1 lb (500 g) salmon, cut in four pieces
- 1 red pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 leek, white and light green part only, washed and cut into thin strips
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) white wine
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) dried dill
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) salt

Directions

1. Preheat the BBQ (or oven) to 400° F (200° C).
2. In a microwave safe bowl, cover the edamame beans with water and microwave for 2 minutes. Drain and set aside.
3. Lay out 4 large squares of tinfoil. On each square place one piece of fish and divide the amount of the red pepper, leek and edamame beans (about 3/4 cup / 175 mL) and place on top.
4. In a small bowl combine the wine, dill, pepper and salt. Divide among the fish, and pour over top of each. Wrap up tinfoil tightly.
5. Cook for 15 minutes. Open and serve.