

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

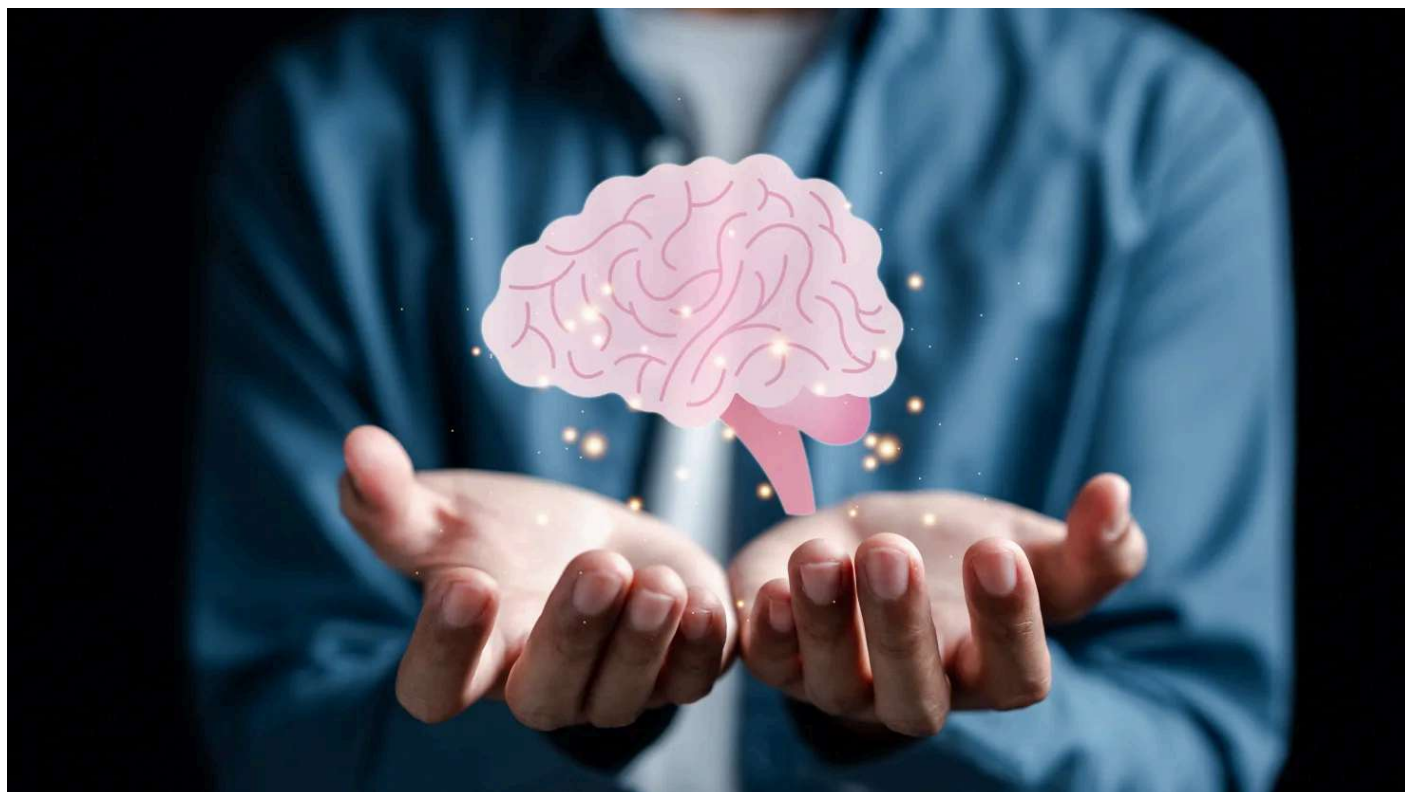
Harvard study: This cooking ingredient can help keep your brain sharp—how a doctor uses it every day

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Sogol Ash, Contributor

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kitchen staple consistently rises to the top: olive oil.



to its powerful [antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties](#).

In fact, a [2024 Harvard study](#) of 92,383 American adults highlighted a [compelling link](#) between olive oil consumption and a reduced risk of dying from dementia-related causes.

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Regardless of genetic predisposition and overall diet, participants who consumed at least 7 grams of olive oil per day had a 28% lower risk of dementia-related death compared to those who never or rarely consumed olive oil.

Why olive oil is a brain-boosting powerhouse

I often prescribe the [Mediterranean diet](#), which has been extensively studied for its cognitive benefits. Olive oil is essential to it.

Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats, which are well-documented for their [role in brain health](#). These healthy fats promote blood flow to the brain and reduce inflammation.

Additionally, olive oil contains polyphenols, such as oleocanthal, which have been shown to [combat oxidative stress and inflammation](#), both of which can increase your risk of neurodegenerative diseases like dementia.

Need more convincing? Here are a few other benefits of olive oil:

- **Appetite regulation.** Olive oil helps promote [satiety](#), which can support healthy weight — a [key factor](#) in reducing dementia risk.

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- **Energy boost.** Olive oil provides sustained [energy for focus](#) without spiking blood sugar.
- **Antioxidant shield.** Rich in [vitamin E](#) and [polyphenols](#), it protects brain cells from oxidative damage.
- **Skin health.** Olive oil's [anti-inflammatory properties](#) support skin repair, indirectly benefiting brain health by reducing systemic inflammation.

How I add olive oil to my diet every day

1. Take a shot

Each day I take a shot — one to two tablespoons — of high-quality, cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, either first thing in the morning or as a mid-afternoon boost. To enhance the flavor, I add a squeeze of lemon juice or a pinch of turmeric for an extra antioxidant kick.

2. Veggie snack

Coming from Mediterranean roots, a daily childhood snack was sliced cucumbers with a drizzle of olive oil, fresh lemon juice and a pinch of sea salt, and it remains a favorite.

3. Meal topper

My go-to salad dressing is olive oil, fresh lemon juice, Dijon mustard and a touch of honey. For dinner, I will often I finish roasted fish or vegetables with a splash of olive

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But cooking with olive oil will not destroy its benefits. It retains many of its health properties at moderate cooking temperatures, such as sautéing or roasting at 350°F or lower. For higher-heat cooking, I suggest using avocado oil, which has a higher smoke point.

Ultimately, incorporating olive oil into your diet is an easy, delicious way to support brain health and reduce the risk of dementia. Small, consistent changes — like adding this superfood to your routine — can have a significant impact on your cognitive health and overall well-being.

Dr. Sogol Ash is a naturopathic doctor and functional medicine researcher. As the Clinical Director for Concierge MD, she merges cutting-edge science with personalized care to help her patients achieve optimal health and longevity. She is also Chair of the [Neuromuscular Disease Foundation](#), leading efforts to find cures for rare genetic diseases while promoting prevention through education. Follow her on [Instagram](#).

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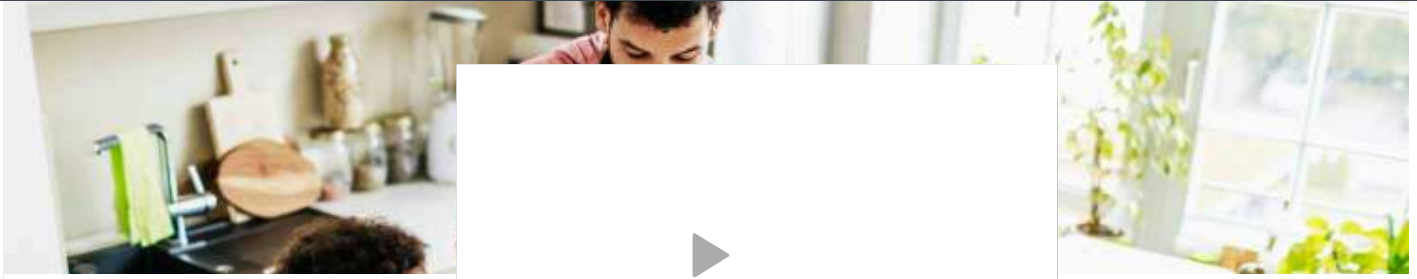
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