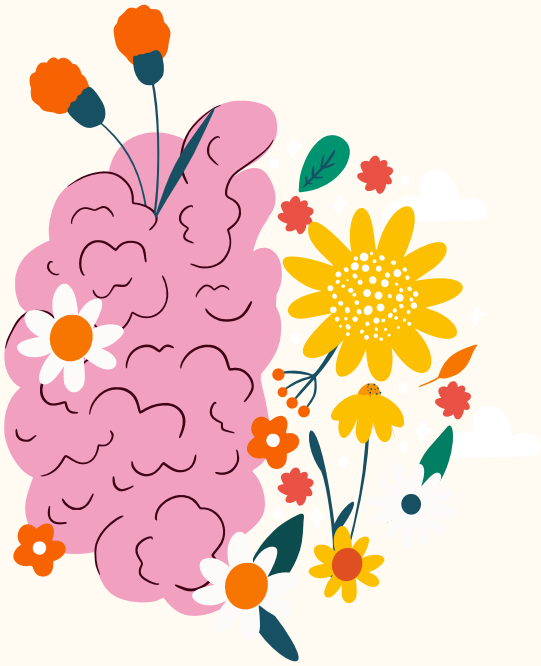


The Lifestyle and Culinary Medicine Newsletter

we're so glad you're here!

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS

Alzheimer and Brain Health Awareness Month



As we welcome the warmth and vibrance of June, it is the perfect time to turn our focus inward to one of our most vital organs: the brain.

June is officially recognized as Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to understanding the complexities of cognitive health and the proactive steps we can take to protect it.

The brain is the command center of everything we do—from the way we move and speak to the cherished memories we hold dear. While aging is a natural process, cognitive decline doesn't have to be an inevitable part of it. Research increasingly shows that the same lifestyle choices that support our heart and physical strength—such as mindful nutrition, consistent movement, and restorative sleep—play a monumental role in maintaining a sharp, resilient mind.

In this month's edition, we explore the powerful connection between our daily habits and long-term brain vitality

Your brain has an incredible capacity for adaptation and healing. Let's use this month to celebrate its complexity and commit to the lifestyle pillars that keep us thinking clearly and living fully.

Sending wishes for a month filled with all the good things, To your health and happiness!

With care,

Dr. Lateef





MIND Diet:

MIND stands for Mediterranean–Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay.

The MIND diet is a hybrid of the Mediterranean and DASH diets. The focus is on plant-based foods, especially leafy greens, berries, fruits, seeds, nuts, olive oil, and legumes with limiting the intake of animal-based foods, especially foods high in saturated fat.

Nutritional science has revealed that the brain is a highly metabolic organ, requiring a constant supply of high-quality fuel to maintain its complex network of neurons.

Specific dietary patterns, such as the Mediterranean and MIND diets, have shown remarkable promise in reducing the risk of cognitive decline. This isn't just about avoiding "bad" foods; it's about the synergistic effect of phytonutrients.

For instance, the antioxidants found in dark berries can cross the blood-brain barrier to combat oxidative stress, while omega-3 fatty acids are literal building blocks for brain cell membranes, supporting the structural integrity needed for fast, clear communication between cells.

By focusing on anti-inflammatory, whole-food sources, we aren't just eating for today's energy—we are providing the biochemical environment necessary to preserve memory and executive function for the future.

Brain Health on a Busy Schedule: Maintaining a brain-healthy diet is much easier when the right choices are the most convenient ones. Here are a few ways to prep this month's featured ingredients so you can assemble a nutrient-dense meal in minutes:

The "Wash and Dry" Ritual: As soon as you bring home your leafy greens and berries, wash and thoroughly dry them. Store greens in a container lined with a dry paper towel to absorb excess moisture—this keeps them crisp for up to a week.

Batch-Toast Your Nuts: Spend five minutes toasting a large batch of walnuts in a dry pan or oven (350°F for about 5–7 minutes). Let them cool completely before storing them in a glass jar. This enhances their flavor and makes them a ready-to-use topper for salads, oatmeal, or yogurt.

The Mason Jar Dressing: Double or triple the Lemon-Ginger Vinaigrette recipe and store it in a sealed jar in the fridge. Because it's olive oil-based, it may solidify slightly when cold; simply let it sit on the counter for a few minutes or run the jar under warm water before shaking and serving.

Pre-Slice Your Alliums: Thinly slice your red onions at the start of the week and keep them in a small airtight container. Having them ready to go makes it effortless to add a punch of anti-inflammatory flavor to any dish.

Brain Health
ON A BUSY SCHEDULE

- 1 The "Wash and Dry" Ritual:**  
- 2 Batch-Toast Your Nuts:**  
- 3 The Mason Jar Dressing:**  
- 4 Pre-Slice Your Alliums:**  

Brain-Boosting Berry & Walnut Spinach Salad

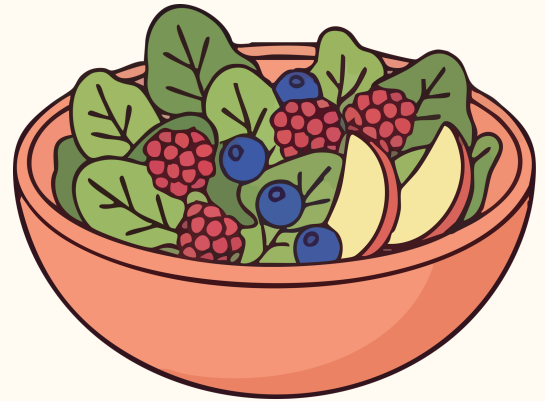
This is a great base recipe that can be varied endlessly to suit your taste preferences or whatever veggies you have on hand. If you prep the vegetables and whole grains to serve ahead of time, you can have this on the table in minutes.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups fresh baby spinach or mixed power greens
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1/4 cup raw walnuts, lightly toasted and chopped
- 1/2 a small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta or blue cheese (optional)
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced (for healthy monounsaturated fats)

Ingredients for the Lemon-Ginger Vinaigrette:

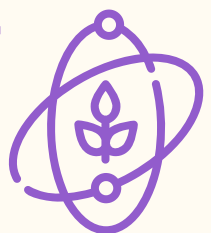
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp freshly grated ginger (to support neuro-inflammation)
- A pinch of sea salt and black pepper



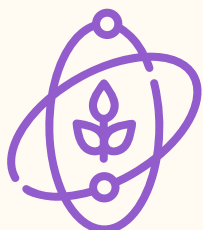
Instructions:

1. Whisk the Dressing: In a small jar or bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, honey, and grated ginger. Whisk until emulsified and season with salt and pepper.
2. Assemble: In a large bowl, toss the spinach with half of the dressing to coat the leaves lightly.
3. Top: Layer the blueberries, toasted walnuts, red onion, and avocado slices over the greens.
4. Finish: Drizzle the remaining dressing over the top and sprinkle with cheese if desired. Serve immediately.

The Science Behind the Ingredients



- Blueberries: Contain antioxidants that may improve signaling between brain cells.
- Walnuts: These nuts are shaped like brains for a reason—they are uniquely high in DHA; a type of Omega-3 fatty acid linked to improved cognitive performance.
- Leafy Greens like Spinach is packed with Vitamin K, lutein, and folate, which help slow the rate of cognitive decline.



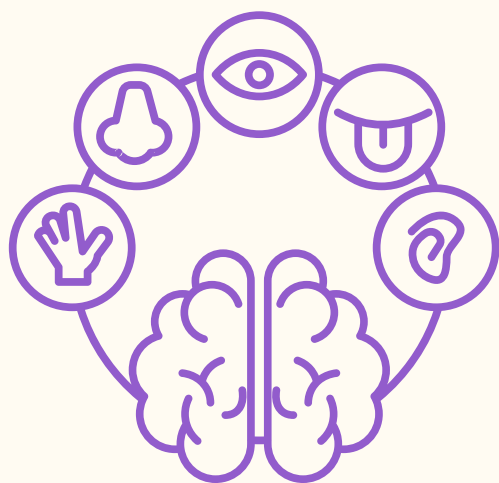
Instagram | @humairalateefmd

Movement Tip

The "Brain-Body" Connection

Physical activity is one of the most powerful tools we have for cognitive preservation. When we move, our bodies produce a protein called BDNF (Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor), which acts like "miracle-grow" for our brain cells, supporting the growth of new neurons and strengthening the connections between them.

This Month's Movement Tip: Incorporate "Sensory Walks" While any movement is beneficial, taking your exercise outdoors can provide a double dose of brain benefits.



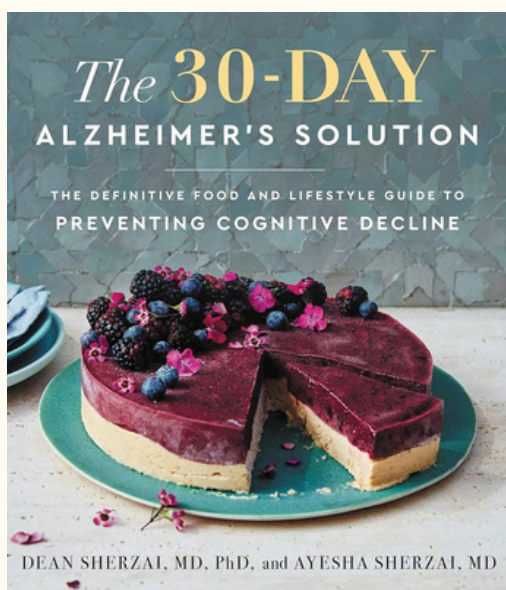
This month, try a Sensory Walk:

-Engage the Senses: As you walk, intentionally notice three things you see (the vibrant green of the leaves), two things you hear (birds or the wind), and one thing you smell (freshly cut grass).

-The Benefit: Combining cardiovascular exercise with sensory engagement forces the brain to process environmental data in real-time, which enhances spatial awareness and mindfulness.

-Aim for Consistency: Even a brisk 20-minute walk has been shown to increase blood flow to the hippocampus—the area of the brain responsible for verbal memory and learning. Whether it's a stroll through a local park or a quick lap around the block, remember that movement is medicine for your mind.

Book Suggestion:



The 30-DAY ALZHEIMER'S SOLUTION **By Dean Sherzai, MD, PhD and Ayesha Sherzai, MD**

As co-directors of the Brain Health and Alzheimer's Prevention Program at Loma Linda University, the Sherzais are leading experts in cognitive longevity. Their recipes focus heavily on reducing neuroinflammation through delicious, whole-food, plant-based meals.

This book offers incredible depth on the mechanisms of brain health, with fantastic recipes for nutrient-dense breakfasts, hearty grain bowls, and inventive ways to use herbs and spices (like turmeric and rosemary) for neuroprotection.

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A Final Note on Cognitive Wellness:

As we navigate this month of awareness, remember that brain health is a lifelong journey made up of small, daily choices. Whether it's trying a new recipe, taking a brisk walk in the fresh air, or simply taking a moment to connect with a friend, every intentional act supports the resilience of your mind.

I would love to hear from you! What are your favorite ways to stay mentally sharp and vibrant? Whether it's a crossword puzzle habit, a favorite way to prepare leafy greens, or a morning routine that keeps you centered, feel free to share your thoughts during our next visit or reply to this newsletter. Let's commit to nourishing our minds and supporting one another in this journey toward long-term vitality



Save the Date:

1. Culinary Medicine Cooking Class

The Gut-Brain Axis & Gut Health

June 20th at Virginia's House, 577 Foundation, Perrysburg
In this hands-on class, we will explore the science of the microbiome and prepare recipes designed to nourish your gut flora and brain health.

Space is limited, so register @ 577 Foundation.org to reserve your spot. Let's cook our way to a healthier gut and a sharper mind!



2. Stroll with a doc: Wild Wellness walkers at the Toledo Zoo.

"Mastering Menopause with Lifestyle"

Register @ToledoZoo.org



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