



AVOCADO INTAKE AND **COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE** IN THE OLDER U.S. POPULATION

Cognitive Health

▶ The ability to clearly think, learn, and remember — is an important component of performing everyday activities. A problem with cognition is called cognitive impairment — a condition that can range from mild to severe.

Sixteen percent of the United States population is aged 65 years and more — and by 2040 **one in five** Americans will be 65+.

While longer lifespans have many benefits, older adults are at a significant risk of having multiple chronic diseases, including cognitive impairment.



Science Suggests Eating Avocado May Have Cognitive Benefits

The Avocado Nutrition Center supported the following research to understand better the relationship between eating avocado and cognition



- ▶ A 2021 observational study¹ published in *Frontiers in Nutrition* examined how avocado relates to cognitive function among a nationally representative sample of 2,886 older adults from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2011-2014.
- Participants completed cognitive tests at home and in the Mobile Examination Center to assess immediate and delayed recall of new verbal learning, executive function, and processing speed and attention. Energy density is the amount of energy in a food.
- Dietary assessment was captured with 24-hour dietary recalls with trained interviewers.
- Approximately 7% of participants were avocado consumers with average avocado and guacamole intakes of just over 70 grams and 50 grams, respectively.
- In general, consumers were younger, more likely to be married, engaged in more vigorous or moderate recreational activities, and had a higher family income to poverty ratio, educational level, and lower BMI.

Avocado consumers had higher diet quality and more favorable cognitive outcomes.

Even when adjusting for many potential confounders such as age, gender, poverty, race, marital status, smoking status, alcohol intake, activity, BMI, diet score. Compared to non-consumers, they demonstrated better immediate and delayed recall and overall global cognition.

Although the findings from this study cannot be considered causal, and more studies are needed to confirm these findings, the data suggest a role for avocados in cognition.

Previous research funded by the Avocado Nutrition Center also investigated the role of avocado in cognitive health.^{2,3}

Inspiration For Increasing Avocado Intake

Avocados are a nutrient-dense, versatile vegetable that can be eaten alone or used in a variety of tasty recipes — from soups to salads to smoothies — all of which can fit into a healthy eating plan.

Older adults (60+) should consume 2 to 3 ½ cups of vegetables per day and 3 ½ to 5 ½ cups of “other vegetables,” like avocados, a week.

One avocado counts as one cup.



Avocado Mexicali Soup

TIP 1:

Top soup with avocado or puree it to make a creamy soup



Heart-Healthy Creamy Sweet Potato Avocado Soup



Heart-Healthy Easy Avocado Cabbage Carrot Cole Slaw

TIP 2:

Enjoy avocado in a side salad or entrée salad



Avocado Mango Rice Salad



Heart-Healthy Avocado Berry Breakfast Smoothie

TIP 3:

Make a sweet or spicy smoothie with avocado



Avocado and Watermelon Chile Lime Spiced Smoothie

References:

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2. Scott TM, Rasmussen HM, Chen O, Johnson E. Avocado consumption increases macular pigment density in older adults: a randomized controlled trial. *Nutrients*. 2017; 9:919.
3. Edwards CG, Walk AM, Thompson SV, Reeser GE, Erdman JW, Burd NA, Holscher HD, Khan NA. Effects of 12-week avocado consumption on cognitive function among adults with overweight and obesity. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*. 2020; 148:13-24