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## **Eating fish is good for the brain**

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**12 October, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Eating fish is good for the brain**

**BNE:** Eating fish on a weekly basis may stop senility setting in during our older years. This is the conclusion of research conducted by the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. The study found that older people who eat fish regularly reduce their amount of cognitive decline. Researchers deduced that over a lifetime of eating fish people could be the equivalent of three to four years mentally younger in age. Lead researcher Martha Clare Morris said: "We found that people who ate one fish meal a week had a 10 percent slower annual decline in thinking. Those who ate two fish meals a week showed a 13 percent slower annual decline. People who rarely eat fish have a somewhat faster decline in their thinking ability over time."

Morris's team collected dietary data on 6,158 people aged 65 and older and tested their memory loss over six years. She said: "This early stage in the research shows that eating fish may help to slow one's decline in people's thinking ability as they age." She attributes her findings to several fatty acids contained in fish, that have been shown to be essential for the brain's development. Eating fish has previously been associated with a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, dementia or having a stroke. Other studies have linked the acids with an ability to retain information in our old age. Oily fish, like salmon and tuna, are a rich source of the acids. The report on the benefits of consuming fish appears in the October 10 online issue of the *Archives of Neurology*\*.

\*<http://archneur.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/62.12.noc50161v1>

## WARM-UPS

**1. BRAIN FACTS:** Walk around the class and find as much information as you can on the brain. After you have finished, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. What did you find out that was interesting? What was surprising? Did you hear anything that you don't think is true?

**2. FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** What can you do or eat to look after your brain? In pairs / groups, talk about how beneficial the following are in keeping your brain healthy and functioning at maximum performance throughout your life. Put them in order of most beneficial.

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ Eating fish                  | ___ Sitting in the sunshine |
| ___ Sleeping eight hours a night | ___ Studying English        |
| ___ Avoiding alcohol             | ___ Massaging your temples  |
| ___ Eating animal brains         | ___ Watching television     |

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Eating fish / senility / research / thinking / diet / memory loss / brain development / Alzheimer's disease / remembering information / old age / salmon / tuna*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. FISH:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with fish. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. BRAIN USE:** In pairs / groups, talk what we use our brains for most at the following stages of our lives. What do we think about most?

baby    child    teenager    thirtysomething    middle aged    old person

**6. MEMORIES:** Complete the following sentences and then talk about them with your partner(s):

- I'll never forget the time I \_\_\_\_\_.
- I remember \_\_\_\_\_ as if it were yesterday.
- I have many happy / wonderful memories of \_\_\_\_\_.
- I often forget to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ brings back memories.
- The greatest tragedy in living memory is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My most unforgettable teacher is \_\_\_\_\_.
- To remind myself to do something important, I \_\_\_\_\_.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Eating fish may make us better at passing examinations.                | T / F |
| b. Old people who eat fish regularly remain mentally alert longer.        | T / F |
| c. Eating fish may keep us four years mentally younger.                   | T / F |
| d. People who do not eat fish spend less time thinking.                   | T / F |
| e. A 6-year study looked at dietary data on more than 6,000 old people.   | T / F |
| f. Our body fat is essential for the brain's development.                 | T / F |
| g. Salmon and tuna do not contribute to our cognitive development.        | T / F |
| h. The study appears in the latest issue of the "Fish and Brain" journal. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. senility   | linked        |
| b. setting in | deterioration |
| c. decline    | assessed      |
| d. deduced    | yearly        |
| e. annual     | abundant      |
| f. collected  | feebleness    |
| g. tested     | reasoned      |
| h. associated | hold          |
| i. retain     | amassed       |
| j. rich       | occurring     |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. on a weekly                     | years mentally younger     |
| b. stop senility                   | loss over six years        |
| c. the equivalent of three to four | a somewhat faster decline  |
| d. a 10 percent slower             | data                       |
| e. People who rarely eat fish have | setting in                 |
| f. dietary                         | information                |
| g. tested their memory             | basis                      |
| h. fatty                           | annual decline in thinking |
| i. an ability to retain            | source                     |
| j. rich                            | acids                      |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WHICH WORD?** Strike through the incorrect word in each of the pairs in bold.

### **Eating fish is good for the brain**

**BNE:** Eating fish on a weekly basis may stop **servility / senility** setting **in / out** during our older years. This is the conclusion of research conducted by the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. The study found that older people who eat fish regularly reduce their amount of cognitive **recline / decline**. Researchers **reduced / deduced** that over a lifetime of eating fish people could be the **equivalent / equidistant** of three to four years mentally younger in age. Lead researcher Martha Clare Morris said: "We found that people who ate one fish meal a week had a 10 percent slower annual decline in thinking. Those who ate two fish meals a week showed a 13 percent slower annual decline. People who **rarely / really** eat fish have a somewhat faster decline in their thinking ability over time."

Morris's team collected **dietary / dietician** data on 6,158 people aged 65 and older and tested their memory **gain / loss** over six years. She said: "This early stage in the research shows that eating fish may help to slow people's decline in thinking ability as they **old / age**." She attributes her findings to several **fatty / slim** acids contained in fish, that have been shown to be essential for the brain's development. Eating fish has previously been associated with a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, dementia or having a **brush / stroke**. Other studies have linked the acids with an ability to retain information in our old age. Oily fish, like salmon and tuna, are a **rich / luxury** source of the acids. The report on the benefits of consuming fish appears in the October 10 online issue of the *Archives of Neurology*.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'memory' and 'loss'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WHICH WORD?** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "BRAIN" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about the brain and what we must do to look after it.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- basis
- regularly
- cognitive
- lifetime
- 10 percent
- somewhat
- dietary
- stage
- fatty
- previously
- retain
- archives

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Do you agree with the headline?
- c. Do you like fish?
- d. Have you ever thought about the link between what we eat and the brain?
- e. Do you have a good memory?
- f. What would you do if you noticed a decrease in your brainpower?
- g. Do you worry about debilitating brain diseases setting in when you are older?
- h. Do you think scientists will discover the cures for many of today's diseases that affect the brain?
- i. What do you do in your life that is bad for your brain?
- j. Will you now eat more salmon and tuna?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you eat to keep your brain healthy?
- d. Do you ever worry about the condition of your brain?
- e. Have you noticed any changes in your cognitive ability over the years?
- f. What do you know about the brain?
- g. Do you think there are other things you can do to help keep your brain healthy and in good working condition?
- h. Do you know of any other food that is good for the brain?
- i. Do you think studying English is good for your brain?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**MEMORY:** In pairs / groups, match the questions and statements in the first column with those in the second.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a Do you have a <i>good memory</i> ?  | 1 I'll never forget the time I crashed my car. I was driving....                                     |
| b Talk about an <i>unforgettable</i> experience.                            | 2 My mother. She never remembers to lock the car and always forgets my birthday.                     |
| c What's your <i>earliest memory</i> ?                                      | 3 Yes, then I could learn 100 languages and pass any exam.   |
| d Do you know anyone who is <i>absent-minded</i> or <i>forgetful</i> ?      | 4 Not bad, but it gets worse the older I become.   |
| e Do you wish you had a <i>photographic memory</i> ?                        | 5 I think it's when I was four. I remember going on an airplane for the first time.                  |
| f Are you good at <i>putting names to faces</i> ?                           | 6 Yes, usually the names of actors. I know the movie but... oh..... what's the word...!!.....aarrgh! |
| g Do you <i>remember</i> to buy everything when you go shopping?            | 7 Yes, many times, especially after I drank too much the night before.                               |
| h Do you ever try to say a word but it's <i>on the tip of your tongue</i> ? | 8 No. Terrible. Especially if I haven't seen someone for a long time.                                |
| i Do you know all of your family and friends' birthdays?                    | 9 Only if I write a list.  |
| j Have you ever <i>lost your memory</i> ?                                   | 10 Yes. Of course... but I never buy them a birthday card.   |

Change partners and check your answers.

Ask each other the questions in the left hand column.

Return to your original partner and report on how your previous partner answered the questions.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Eating fish is good for the brain**

**BNE:** Eating fish on a weekly basis may stop \_\_\_\_\_ setting in during our older years. This is the conclusion of research \_\_\_\_\_ by the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. The study found that older people who eat fish regularly reduce their \_\_\_\_\_ cognitive decline. Researchers deduced that over a lifetime of eating fish people could be the \_\_\_\_\_ three to four years mentally younger in age. Lead researcher Martha Clare Morris said: "We found that people who ate one fish meal a week had a 10 percent slower \_\_\_\_\_ thinking. Those who ate two fish meals a week showed a 13 percent slower annual decline. People who rarely eat fish have a \_\_\_\_\_ decline in their thinking ability over time."

Morris's team collected \_\_\_\_\_ data on 6,158 people aged 65 and older and tested their \_\_\_\_\_ over six years. She said: "This early stage in the research shows that eating fish may help to slow people's decline in thinking ability as they age." She \_\_\_\_\_ her findings to several \_\_\_\_\_ contained in fish, that have been shown to be essential for the brain's development. Eating fish has previously been associated with a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, \_\_\_\_\_ or having a stroke. Other studies have linked the acids with an ability to \_\_\_\_\_ information in our old age. Oily fish, like salmon and tuna, are a rich source of the acids. The report on the benefits of consuming fish appears in the October 10 online issue of the \_\_\_\_\_ *of Neurology*.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the brain. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. BRAIN TRAINING:** You are the boss of Brain Training – a new company that tells people how they can improve their brainpower. Write down a weekly training schedule for the brain - to keep it active and prevent dementia from setting in during old age. Show your schedules to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all include similar things?

**4. MEMORIES:** Write down your earliest memories in as much detail as you can remember. Tell them to your classmates in the next lesson.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. T      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. senility	feebleness
b. setting in	occurring
c. decline	deterioration
d. deduced	reasoned
e. annual	yearly
f. collected	amassed
g. tested	assessed
h. associated	linked
i. retain	hold
j. rich	abundant

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. on a weekly	basis
b. stop senility	setting in
c. the equivalent of three to four	years mentally younger
d. a 10 percent slower	annual decline in thinking
e. People who rarely eat fish have	a somewhat faster decline
f. dietary	data
g. tested their memory	loss over six years
h. fatty	acids
i. an ability to retain	information
j. rich	source

### WHICH WORD?

#### Eating fish is good for the brain

**BNE:** Eating fish on a weekly basis may stop **servility / senility** setting **in / out** during our older years. This is the conclusion of research conducted by the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. The study found that older people who eat fish regularly reduce their amount of cognitive **recline / decline**. Researchers **reduced / deduced** that over a lifetime of eating fish people could be the **equivalent / equidistant** of three to four years mentally younger in age. Lead researcher Martha Clare Morris said: "We found that people who ate one fish meal a week had a 10 percent slower annual decline in thinking. Those who ate two fish meals a week showed a 13 percent slower annual decline. People who **rarely / really** eat fish have a somewhat faster decline in their thinking ability over time."

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### MEMORY:

a - 4      b - 1      c - 5      d - 2      e - 3      f - 8      g - 9      h - 6      i - 10      j - 7