



Dr Katherine Kent

Colourful food for thought

Nutrition Scientist

College of Health and Medicine, University of Tasmania



Don't you just hate it when you can't think of a word?! Of course this happens to everyone occasionally, but for people living with dementia forgetting words or people's names may be a stressful daily occurrence. Unfortunately, dementia is becoming very common in Australia and currently there is no cure.

In recent years, some exciting research has shown that eating certain foods can slow the development and progression of dementia, and in particular a group of compounds called flavonoids are causing a stir.

Flavonoids are an amazing array of natural compounds found in all plants, which provide a plant with its bright colours. We eat a variety of flavonoids when we eat colourful fruits and vegetables.

Interestingly, a high consumption of flavonoids is linked to protection against dementia, as flavonoids improve blood flow to the brain and they combat the wear and tear in the brain which happens as a result of aging and dementia.

As a nutrition scientist, I am interested in measuring the amount of flavonoids that people eat. I am also exploring the impact of giving people natural fruit flavonoids to see if there are improvements in brain function.

You may be thinking that flavonoids are the silver bullet cure for dementia, but it is not that simple. However, our early research shows very interesting results meaning that the role of flavonoids in improving brain function is definitely food for thought.

Find me on Twitter at [@drkatherinekent](https://twitter.com/drkatherinekent)

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