

Amazing Place Launches Innovative Brain-Healthy Meal Program

While there has been a lot of attention today focused on heart-healthy foods, research has also demonstrated there are certain foods and nutrients such as fresh fruits and green leafy vegetables, nuts, specific spices, whole grains, and foods containing omega-3 fatty acids that benefit our brain as well.

Amazing Place, the only day center in Houston exclusively for adults with mild to moderate dementia, has introduced an innovative brain-healthy nutrition plan, the Memory Preservation Nutrition® Program (MPN™) for its participants. Amazing Place is the first day program in the U.S. and only facility outside of Massachusetts to use MPN™, which incorporates foods and nutrients shown to improve overall brain health, reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, and slow the progression of the disease in those who have been diagnosed.

The unique evidence-based program is being implemented in conjunction with the Brain Health and Wellness Center® in Massachusetts, under the leadership of Nancy Emerson Lombardo, Ph.D.

Developed by a multi-disciplinary team under the leadership of Lombardo, MPN™ integrates research from hundreds of studies looking at the connection between diet, cognitive health, aging and Alzheimer's disease.

In a study reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, individuals who followed a Mediterranean-type diet (with similar components to the MPN™) had a 32-40% decreased risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. Studies have also demonstrated that certain foods and nutrients reduce the conversion of persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment to Alzheimer's disease.

Most recently, the first randomized clinical trial connecting diet to brain health showed those following a healthier diet had better cognitive scores than those who did not.

Last fall, Lombardo and her team met with Linda St. Hill, Amazing Place Dietary Manager, and Jayne Gilbert, Consulting Dietician, to begin the process of recipe, menu and pantry "makeovers". Menus have been modified to include more

vegetarian and seafood entrees, fresh vegetables, whole grains, spices, healthier snacks, and brain-healthy desserts.

In addition, the new nutrition plan focuses on reducing cholesterol, refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup and animal saturated fats and eliminating all trans fats.

Some examples of the new menu items include orange-avocado salad, homemade hummus with fresh raw vegetables, spinach enchiladas, crab cakes, lentil soup, cheese soufflé, and brain-healthy apple crisp. Green and tan packets of natural sugar substitutes have replaced white sugar and pink and yellow packets of artificial sugar substitutes on the tables. In addition, the meals are using many more brain-healthy spices such as cinnamon, garlic, ginger, turmeric, sage, rosemary and pepper.

Lombardo adds, "With all the research demonstrating the benefits of these brain-healthy foods, we expect more and more health care facilities around the nation will follow the lead of Amazing Place and implement brain-healthier meal programs."

Amazing Place is also expanding the program to educate participants' families as well as the community on brain-healthy nutrition. If your company, church, professional or civic group is interested in a presentation on the Memory Pres-



Nancy Emerson Lombardo, Ph.D. president, Brain Health and Wellness Center, meets with Tracey Brown, Amazing Place executive director, to review the benefits of brain-healthy foods such as fresh berries and green leafy vegetables, whole grains, olive and fish oil, nuts and spices, in preventing and slowing the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

ervation Nutrition® Program, contact Susan Giles, Amazing Place Community and Church Liaison, at (713) 552-0420.

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