

- Convenience foods

Junk food linked to memory impairment in teens, warn researchers

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NO more fast food, sweets and other ultra-processed foods for teenagers! An American study conducted on rats has linked lasting memory impairment to a diet rich in fat and sugar during adolescence.



Tired of your teenager not remembering what you say? Maybe it's time to steer clear of industrial cookies, potato chips or fast food! You may not reap the benefits immediately, but a healthy diet and lifestyle will serve teens well into adulthood, and not just in terms of nutrition. Junk food in general — or a diet rich in fat and sugar — may cause long-term damage to adolescent brains, research suggests. According to a study published in 'Brain, Behaviour and Immunity', by researchers in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Southern California, there is a link between what we eat and how our brain functions, and more specifically the hippocampus, which is a brain structure playing a central role in cognition, memory and learning. The hippocampus is where a chemical substance called acetylcholine acts. This is a neurotransmitter involved in memory and functions such as learning, attention, arousal and involuntary muscle movement. Previous research has shown that people with Alzheimer's disease tend to have lower levels of acetylcholine in the brain. The problem with a diet too rich in fat and sugar is that it disrupts the signal from this neurotransmitter, researchers say.

Scientists carried out analyses on two groups of rats, one fed a diet rich in fat and sugar, the other a healthy diet. This diet was provided both at juvenile age and at an age similar to adolescence.

Following object-based memory tests, the experiment revealed that memory problems did not disappear, even when the diet was improved, with the removal of junk food.

In other words, a poor diet in adolescence appears to have a long-term impact on memory, the effects of which may not be easily reversible.