

# **Do your brain a favour ... eat tomatoes!**

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Eating tomatoes is good for the brain! A team of researchers at INSERM (the French Institute of Health and Medical Research) has shown that cerebral ageing appears to be connected in part to a shortage of certain carotenoids, in particular lycopene and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants found abundantly in fruit and vegetables. And in tomatoes in particular.

Oxidative stress is a chemical reaction that leads to cell destruction and is one of the theories put forward to explain cerebral ageing. A number of studies have already suggested, or on the contrary, challenged the fact that antioxidants could help prevent decline in cognitive function. To get to the bottom of this, the researchers relied on an epidemiological study launched in 1991, involving 1,400 people between the ages of 60 and 70. All underwent a range of tests to assess their intellectual function and their biological profile.

The results show clearly that low levels of lycopene and zeaxanthin are associated with poorer cognitive performance. Eventually this discovery could lead to public health measures being taken aimed at changing the eating habits of those at risk of dementia. Meanwhile, for your information, our intake of zeaxanthin comes mainly from the consumption of green vegetables and fruit and lycopene from grapefruit, watermelon and tomatoes.

**<http://www.destinationsante.com/Do-your-brain-a-favour-eat-tomatoes,28070.html>**