

Brain Food: What to Eat to Boost Your Brain Power

I was up in Jacksonville a couple of months ago working with my co-author on an upcoming presentation. Stressed, behind schedule and pushed to make our deadline, we had created this stress for ourselves due to crazy schedules. After working all morning, we were hungry and stopped for lunch. As we got back into the car, Cathy started the motor and I was waiting for her to back out of the parking space. But I noticed she was digging through her purse. I asked her if she had lost something and she said "I can't find my car keys!" I said, "Cathy, the keys are in the ignition and the car is running!" She just looked at me and said "Wow, I have way too much on my mind." And then we started laughing out loud. Has something like this happened to you?

Boosting brain power is big business. You'll find all types of products from caffeine containing drinks to herbal supplements made with ginkgo biloba to pills with names like Focus Factor claiming to protect your mind and memory. Today, we're going to focus on brain food. Are there foods you can eat that will help keep your mind sharp? Help prevent dementia over time and even Alzheimer's disease? First, let's make the tie between the brain and the heart. Research is ahead of the game for the heart in terms of prevention. We know a lot about which foods to eat and how much and what type of exercise benefits the heart. We also know that diabetes, high blood pressure and weight gain, especially around the middle negatively affect the ticker. Research is indicating that many of the same factors that affect your heart affect your brain. When I talk about brain function and keeping your brain sharp, I'm referring to your memory, ability to reason, concentration and ability to learn...all functions of the brain that you want to preserve.

Most of the foods that are good for your heart are also good for your brain because both need healthy blood vessels and a constant supply of oxygen to function normally. Plus certain foods help protect brain cells and blood vessels and keep those neurotransmitters or brain chemicals firing and sending their signals or messages. These foods help prevent brain fog as many of us refer to it or that momentary hesitation...you know what I'm talking about...you know the answer to that but you can't think of it right now.

Grab your pen or Blackberry because I have a list of beneficial brain foods for you to add to your diet now. Remember, many times it's not just the one food alone with the benefit but the synergistic effect or team effect of including a number of these foods in your diet.

- Blueberries and other berries
- Spinach and other greens
- Fatty Fish containing omega-3 fats: herring, sardines, salmon
- Eggs with DHA added (one of the omega-3 fats), another option if you don't eat fish

Studies from the Chicago Health and Aging Project at Rush University found that people who regularly consume foods rich in niacin or vitamin B3 and vitamin E had healthier brains. Additionally those people eating three or more servings of veggies each day kept their mental faculties in tack 40% longer than those eating only one serving per day.

- Niacin sources: nuts, poultry and other meat, fish and enriched grains such as brown rice
- Vitamin E: nuts, olive oil, seeds and green leafy veggies.

Why food for vitamin E over supplements? Vitamin E sources of food have all the forms of vitamin E versus the one typically found in most supplements and these different forms of E may play different roles in the brain such as minimizing inflammation and preventing damage to brain cells both of which are tied to cognitive decline or loss of brain function.

- Curried nuts: toast your nuts with a pinch of turmeric, an Indian spice typically found in curried food (contains curcumin...the yellow pigment).

You can help yourself stay mentally sharp by adding some of these brain boosting foods to your diet. Take your list to the grocery the next time you go so you won't be saying ... now where is my grocery list?

By Dr. Mitchell, co-author of *Fat is Not Your Fate*, *Eat to Stay Young* and *I'd Kill for a Cookie*.

Courtesy: <http://www.thirdage.com/today/nutrition/brain-food-what-to-eat-to-boost-your-brain-power>