



Food for the brain - 12 foods for effective work

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Abstract. The article discusses the main functions of the brain for normal human life and its relationship with the body. A systematic review of modern specialized literature and relevant scientific data was carried out. A list of products useful for brain function is indicated. Potentially unfavorable products for brain activity are analyzed separately, general recommendations for maintaining its health are indicated.

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The human brain is the most complex part of the body. It performs millions of operations every day and, unlike a computer, it never stops working. Therefore, it must be constantly fed. Although food does not increase IQ and does not make us smarter, it can energize us and help us concentrate. By adding smart foods to your diet, you will increase your chances of getting high grades in school, passing exams, successfully passing courses, getting a good job, and maintaining brain function in old age.

Healthy food is the best fuel for the brain

First of all, glucose is needed for mental work. The body receives it from any carbohydrates and delivers it to every cell with the blood. The problem is that the brain cannot store its reserves and requires fuel every day. ^[one]

You can get glucose from slow and fast carbohydrates. The latter have a lot of harm and few (or no) valuable ingredients. If you do not feed the body with beneficial compounds, this will lead to feelings of fatigue, sadness and irritation.

Sleep problems, poor memory, difficulty solving problems are hardly something you want to experience every day while studying or working. Choose healthy foods that improve memory and make any learning process easier.

Top 12 Healthy Foods for Efficient Brain Functioning

1. Oily fish

Salmon, mackerel, tuna, herring, sardines are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids. The membrane of each cell is built from phospholipids, which is why the constant use of oily fish facilitates communication between neurons, accelerates blood circulation, mental functions and the ability to remember information. ^[2]

2. Dark chocolate

Delicacy with 70% cocoa rich in flavonoids, caffeine, antioxidants. The compounds slow down age-related mental degradation, fight oxidative stress, and prevent cognitive impairment. ^[3]

3. Blueberries

Antioxidants in berries are represented by anthocyanin, caffeic acid, catechin, quercetin. Herbal ingredients are known for their anti-inflammatory action. Some of them accumulate in the brain and slow down age-related neurodegenerative processes. In addition to blueberries, scientists advise eating strawberries, blackberries, blackcurrants, and mulberries. ^[4, 5]

4. Turmeric

Curcumin, the active component of the spice, crosses the blood-brain barrier and directly affects the functioning of brain cells. It stimulates their growth in people with Alzheimer's disease, improves mood - the level of serotonin and dopamine. It is worth considering that turmeric is only 3–6% curcumin, and most studies use highly concentrated supplements at dosages of 500–2000 mg/day. ^[6, 7]

5. Nuts and seeds

They contain omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, which makes them boosters of brain activity at any age, especially in the elderly. Vitamin E protects cells from oxidative stress caused by free radicals, reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease, restores cognitive abilities - sensory and intellectual. ^[8, 9]

6. Whole grains

Whole grains are another source of vitamin E. Brown rice, barley, wheat, buckwheat, oatmeal, and other whole grains reduce inflammation and preserve memory. They provide energy during the day and the necessary substances - thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, folate, iron, magnesium, selenium.

7. Coffee

The drink relieves drowsiness, increases concentration and the ability to process a large amount of information. The antioxidants in coffee support these processes in adulthood—lifelong coffee consumption is associated with a reduced risk of stroke, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's. ^[10]

8. Avocado

Source of healthy monounsaturated fats reduces high blood pressure associated with cognitive impairment. Each fruit is also loaded with anti-inflammatory agents - phytonutrients , polyphenols, flavonoids . In addition, 20 different minerals and vitamins in avocados support the function of information-carrying nerves. ^[eleven]

9. Eggs

Folic acid, choline, vitamins B6 and B12 are found in protein and yolk. They prevent brain contraction, support cognitive functions. Egg yolks are one of the most concentrated sources of choline, which the body uses to create the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. The latter is responsible for mood, memory. ^[12]

10. Broccoli

Low-calorie asparagus is a rich source of dietary fiber and glucosinolate compounds . When they are broken down in the body, isothiocyanates are produced . These mustard oils reduce oxidative stress, a risk factor for neurodegenerative diseases. Other cruciferous vegetables with glucosinolates include bok choy , turnips, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower. Broccoli also contains vitamin C and flavonoids for mental health. ^[13]

11. Oranges

One medium orange can contain 90% of the daily value of vitamin C. According to one study, high blood levels are associated with better problem solving, focus, attention, and speed of decision making. It additionally fights free radicals that damage brain cells and protects against depressive disorders, anxiety, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's disease. ^[14, 15]

12. Green tea

The caffeine in green tea improves alertness, performance, memory, and concentration. Another beneficial ingredient in the drink is the amino acid L- theanine . It reduces anxiety and makes a person feel more relaxed, thus offsetting the stimulating effects of caffeine. ^[16, 17]

Additional Ways to Improve Brain Performance

Food supplements such as beta-carotene, magnesium, vitamins B, C and E increase brain activity and have a general strengthening effect. But resorting to dietary supplements is worth it if there is a shortage of these substances. You should also pay attention to dietary supplements with ginseng, curcumin .

An important role in brain health is played by 8-hour sleep, physical activity. Researchers have proven that sport is a powerful stimulator of neuroplasticity . Therefore, athletes are easier to switch off from the noise of life, process information faster than people without sports thinking. As a result, they have a healthier nervous system.

Expert comment

Tatyana Eliseeva, nutritionist, nutritionist

Is the number of recommendations on nutrition and lifestyle crazy and you just can't put them into practice? Then it's time to make a menu for the week, taking into account activity. The right diet will

not only improve the quality of life today, but will also greatly reduce the risk of developing neurological problems later in life.

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