

# Brain Superfoods



Your brain is part of your central nervous system, and is the control centre for your body. It can be divided into 3 main sections – the cerebrum, cerebellum and the brain stem. Your brain is made up of billions of nerve cells, called neurons, which control all the essential functions of your body. The brain also enables you to think, remember, learn, and feel.

Throughout life, there are many factors that may affect the health of your brain, and how well it works. Eating high-quality foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants nourishes and protects the brain.

## The Gut – Brain Connection

Diet is the single most important variable in gut microbial composition and health. So, what foods can help to provide a healthy Gut-Brain axis?

- 1. Eating a wide and diverse range of foods** will support a diverse gut microbiome, which in turn supports a healthy brain. Think, lots of colourful foods, the greater the variety, the better for your gut diversity.
- 2. High-fiber foods:** Whole grains, nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables all contain prebiotic fibers that are good for your gut bacteria.
- 3. Polyphenol-rich foods:** cocoa, green tea, olive oil and coffee all contain polyphenols, which are plant chemicals that are digested by your gut bacteria. These plant chemicals increase the healthy gut bacteria, and they can improve cognition.
- 4. Omega-3 fats:** Omega 3s, are known as healthy fats. They are really great for your brain & reducing inflammation throughout your body which may lead to illness. These fats are not able to be produced by our body, so we must consume them. Omega-3 is naturally found in salmon, herring, tuna, our marine sources, as well as plant sources, including linseeds, walnuts and some oils such as canola oil.

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## Foods to avoid:

Limit your intake of the following foods to avoid the negative effects on both your physical health and your brain health:

- Refined Sugar
- Take Away foods
- Alcohol
- Excessive caffeine

## What else can I do to boost my brain health?

- 1. Train your brain** – Exercising the brain is thought to build reserves of healthy brain cells and the connections between them. Boost your brain power with a new book, sign-up for a language class or commit to cracking the cryptic crossword.
- 2. Train your Body** – Not only is regular exercise good for the body but it's also good for the brain. Exercise increases circulation, including circulation to the head area, and therefore increases blood flow and nutrition to the brain. Take a yoga class, go for a run with a mate or even just go for a walk take a walk each day.
- 3. Reduce your stress** – Try meditating for 5 minutes first thing in the morning and again before you go to bed.
- 4. Brain power supplements** - Having a nourishing, well rounded diet gives our brain the best chance of avoiding disease. If your diet is unbalanced for whatever reason, you may want to consider a multivitamin and mineral complex and an omega-3 fatty acid supplement to help make up a few of the essentials. B vitamins, Ginkgo biloba and turmeric have also been shown to boost brain health.

If you are considering taking a supplement it is best to discuss this with your GP or qualified healthcare professional.