

Eat Your Way to a Healthy Brain

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"You are what you eat." This phrase has been used so many times, but have you ever really stopped to think about its meaning? Maybe to a small child, the interpretation of the phrase would be that if she eats a carrot, she will physically turn into one giant carrot! Or a giant bag of Skittles! It's kind of a frightening thought with that type of concrete thinking; however, for those who are capable and more open to abstract thought, we can understand that the meaning is simple. The type and amount of food that you eat becomes a part of how you look, think and even feel.

There is no denying that we all struggle with our emotional health from time to time. According to The Center for Disease Control (CDC), the most common mental health disorders among children in the United States showed significant data in children aged 3-17 years:

- 7.4% (approx. 4.5 million) have a diagnosed behavior problem
- 7.1% (approx. 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety
- 3.2% (approx. 1.9 million) have diagnosed depression

There are several studies that suggest a connection between diet and exercise and emotional/mental health, but the purpose of this brief message is to acknowledge the ways that food and nutrition can enhance and help overall brain and body functioning and make you feel good!

Your brain (and body for that matter) is fed and cleansed by the food that you eat; nutrients that are broken down travel through your bloodstream to provide necessary benefits such as vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that nourish and protect the brain from stress, waste and damaged cells. It's as if the food you eat provides you with a satisfying home cooked meal and then does the housekeeping for your brain and mind! Ideally, you want to consume the types of foods that will enhance your overall body functioning so that you can get those wonderful nutrients to your brain. Here are just a few foods to chew on:

- **Colorful vegetables** like bell peppers, tomatoes, radishes, carrots and so many more have a variety of vitamins and minerals that fuel your body and brain!
- **Leafy green vegetables** such as kale, spinach, collards and broccoli provide nutrients such as folate, Vitamin E & K, carotenoids and flavonoids, which have been shown to slow brain aging.
- **Berries** like blueberries and strawberries are a sweet treat and also have those nutrients to kickstart the brain in a positive way!
- **Nuts** may be high in calories and fat, but they are packed with Vitamin E which is known for its brain protective qualities-a handful a week will do the job.
- **Beans, lentils, and soybeans** pack in protein and fiber which are rich in B vitamins and clean and feed the brain and body!
- **Fatty fish like tuna and salmon** are abundant sources of omega-3 fatty acids and healthy unsaturated fats that can help lower the risk of some damaging brain particles among several whole body benefits.



Think about food in a way that promotes the adage, “you are what you eat.” You want to consume those foods that are natural, whole, and unpackaged. It can be difficult to incorporate some of the foods listed above, but if you take the time to add at least one of those items to at least one meal a day, soon you’ll be encouraged to go big and feed your brain the right way!

Want to continue to improve your overall health and wellness? Consider adding in these additional resources: food tracker, fitness tracker, wellness, improving health, sleep tracker, etc.



Food Trackers

- [Fooducate](#)
- [Choose My Plate](#)



Fitness and Activity

- [Nutrition](#)
- [Fitness Apps](#)



Sleep Tracker

- FitBit Alta HR and Fitbit Versa
- Motiv Ring
- Withings Sleep

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