



SUPER FOODS FOR THE BRAIN

THE BRAIN IS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED PIECE OF TISSUE

in the known universe. It's not only very complex in function – it's also extremely sensitive and is very energy demanding. And what we eat impacts it directly. So much so that researchers now know that nutrient deficiencies can foreshadow cognitive decline. Most people think that brain super foods are exotic and expensive foods, that must be gathered from distant and hard-to-reach locations. They couldn't be more wrong because many of the best superfoods for our amazing brains can be found at our local supermarket or farmers' market.



The brain needs its army of neurons, specialised nerve cells, to be able to connect with each other at great speed, to pass on messages, and to stay healthy. Different nutrients play different roles in relation to these activities. However, all these activities need to be working well for our brain to work well.

In addition, our gut needs to be working well, as the nutrients that find their way into our blood stream and then into our brain, must be digested and absorbed optimally. If our trillions of gut bacteria aren't as healthy as possible, this affects the quantity and quality of the nutrients that are available for our brain to use.

The first rule to adhere to is to make sure that the food you eat is as close to nature as possible. When you buy the bulk of your food from the fresh produce section of the supermarket or farmers' market, you're getting many of the brain superfoods you need.

How do you know that they're brain superfoods? The first clue is that they're colourful. The colour of most of the fresh produce we can easily buy holds enormous power because those colours keep our busy neurons healthy. Think of broccoli, mandarins, avocados, mangoes, blueberries, strawberries, and capsicums, to name a few.

The second clue is that they're filled with fibre, and our gut needs fibre to feed the good bacteria so that they stay plentiful. Think of sweet potatoes, onions, leeks, pumpkin, cauliflower, apples, and kiwi fruit, to name a few.

And yes, you've noticed! The brightly coloured fresh produce is also full of fibre – so we tick two boxes when we choose these kinds of food.

But there's more, because these brain superfoods also contain good carbohydrates. And we need unprocessed carbohydrates as they get converted to energy, which those busy neurons need to be able to connect with each other and relay messages.

We also need good fats which we can get from including fresh nuts and seeds, and olive oil, with all our meals, and protein, which we get from these foods too, along with legumes like lentils, beans, chickpeas and grains like brown rice, quinoa, and millet. All these foods are unprocessed, and legumes and grains are also fibre-filled and contain good carbohydrates. Combining legumes and grains provides protein, which is critical for optimum brain function too.

So, we can ensure our neurons connect, communicate, and stay healthy when we choose these brain superfoods for our meals each day, and remove processed foods from our diet.



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