



SOPHIE ATKIN - North East Natural Health Centre



(LEFT)
A diet of fish and vegetables is beneficial to brain power.
(BELOW)
It is essential to stay hydrated. Daily recommendations are 1.5 to 2 litres.

Boost your brain power

As is evident in clinical research, an important relationship exists between good nutrition and brain function.

What we put in our mouth can affect how we think and act and can even regulate our mood.

This is because the brain requires a regular boost of nutrients from our food to function well.

As the most important organ in the human body, the brain gets first priority of available nutrients.

Brain foods are especially important during times of rapid growth and increasing pressures or stress — all of which deplete the brain of vital nutrients, thus reducing our ability to focus, concentrate, learn and be happy.

If you notice you or your child is feeling cranky, unable to concentrate or has a “fuzzy” head, the following diet and lifestyle advice may be beneficial.

Hydration

Water is essential for every cell in your body. Low water intake leads to fatigue, headaches, poor concentration, muscle tension and cramps.

So don't wait until you feel thirsty — drink 1.5-2 litres of water each day and prioritise water over coffee or soft drink.

Eat regularly and include snacks

The brain relies on glucose for energy. When your intake of glucose is low, the brain — like the rest of your body — gets tired.

When the brain is deprived of nutrients, you will find yourself feeling sleepy and fuzzy-headed.

So, top up on the following foods regularly:

Protein

Many of the foods listed below are building blocks for the brain's chemical messengers.

A diet adequate in protein also helps maintain a regular blood sugar level which improves mood and concentration.

Protein foods include: fish, milk, eggs, beans and almonds.

Essential fatty acids

EFAs are so-named as they are not made in the body so they must be provided in the diet.

Brain tissue is comprised largely of DHA which is a component of EFA.

EFAs are especially important for growing infants and the elderly.

Foods high in EFA (EPA/DHA)

are avocado, salmon, tuna, nuts and seeds, olive oil.

Antioxidants

Help reduce oxidative stress when your brain is exposed to a build-up of the wrong foods.

Include at least two pieces of fresh fruit and five fresh vegetables each day and occasional servings of dark chocolate or pure cocoa in your cooking.

Reduce:

Sugar, saturated fats (fried foods, chips, margarine), caffeine, artificial sweeteners/colours, soft drink, alcohol, white flour (bread, pasta).

TOP SIX BRAIN FOODS

*FISH – SALMON, TUNA, MACKEREL

*AVOCADO

*NUTS/SEEDS

*WATER

*FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

*OILS – OLIVE, WALNUT, FLAXSEED.

(BELOW)
These foods are full of antioxidants.

