

Nutrition for Brain health

Food can have a powerful impact on our health, including our brain health. Our brain is the powerhouse for us and looks after us. It controls all the muscles we don't think about, such as keeping us breathing and helping our heart pump blood around our bodies. We need to look after it. Our brain uses around 25% of all our energy!

Brain fact! Did you know your brain can produce enough electricity to power a light bulb?

Nutrients important for our brain health include:

1. Fruit and Vegetables: These contain a range of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that have brain protecting properties. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, aiming for 5 portions everyday.
2. Nuts and seeds: These are rich in unsaturated fats, vitamins and minerals such as selenium, vitamin E and magnesium that improve how our brain cells communicate and reduce inflammation. One to two tablespoons of un-roasted and unsalted nuts and seeds counts as a portion.
3. Oily fish: A good source of omega 3s. These fats must be obtained via our diet. They form part of the cell membranes, support brain function and reduce inflammation in the brain. An algae-based supplement is recommended if you do not consume fish.
4. Protein: Protein is made from building blocks (known as amino acids) that support our body's structure and give us energy. One amino acid called Tryptophan is essential, meaning that it must be consumed via our diet. Tryptophan is involved in the production of serotonin (our happy hormone) which can help us feel good.
5. Carbohydrates: These provide us with essential fuel and keep our bowels healthy. They play a role in our brain health by supporting the uptake of the essential tryptophan into the brain, and supply a steady source of energy for our brain to use. It is important to eat a variety of beans, legumes, and whole grain sources.
6. Water: Even mild dehydration can negatively impact your brain and is associated with poor health. We need around 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day. No-added sugar squash is a good option if you do not enjoy the taste of water. Also, be mindful of sugary drink intake.

Overall, following a healthy diet is beneficial for our brain health. Food is amazing, we are so privileged to be able to enjoy and celebrate food on all occasions. It provides opportunities for connection, comfort, memories, fuel, and experiences. Treat yourself to foods that nourish and care for you in all senses.