

19 Best Brain Superfoods

Did you know that your brain is the most expensive real estate in your body? It uses up to 20 to 30 percent of the calories you consume. And, just like your body doesn't benefit from junk food, neither does your brain. One lesser-known fact about obesity is that it negatively impacts cognitive function. If you want to look your best, feel your best, and do your best thinking, you have to give your brain high-quality nutrition.

There's just no way around it. You can exercise all you want, think the right thoughts, meditate and take dietary supplements, but if you continue to eat highly processed foods, laden with sugar, bad fats, and salt; made from ingredients grown with pesticides; flavored with artificial sweeteners; colored with artificial dyes; and preserved with artificial preservatives, there is simply no way to keep your body and brain working at their peak.

Here's a list of 19 of my favorite foods that are good for your body and brain:



1. **Raw Almonds:** the only nut to contain a significant amount of vitamin E which may help to reduce cognitive decline.
2. **Cashews:** rich in antioxidants which help with memory.
3. **Walnuts:** rich in omega-3 fatty acids which are important for helping to maintain cognitive function.
4. **Dark Chocolate:** considered healthy because of its high antioxidant content; the darker the chocolate, the better. Chocolate also has caffeine, which stimulates the brain increasing alertness and focus.
5. **Apples:** contain antioxidants and fiber. Bonus: fiber helps to keep us fuller longer so we eat less and ultimately weight less.
6. **Avocados:** rich in omega-3 fatty acids which are important for helping to maintain cognitive function.
7. **Blueberries:** rich in antioxidants and anthocyanins (the compound that makes blueberries blue and may have an anti-diabetic effect).
8. **Cinnamon:** spices are one of the foods highest in antioxidants, and cinnamon is at the very top of the list. Antioxidants help with memory.
9. **Oregano:** like spices, herbs are also high in antioxidants.
10. **Kale, spinach, and other dark, leafy greens:** rich in iron and phytonutrients (natural-occurring chemicals in plants that may help prevent disease and keep your body working as it should).
11. **Coffee:** like chocolate, coffee contains antioxidants and caffeine.
12. **Sweet potatoes:** are loaded with phytonutrients, fiber and vitamin A.
13. **Coconut Oil:** metabolism, weight control. Being overweight is linked to decline in cognitive function. Coconut oil primarily consists of medium-chain fatty acids. One 2008 study examined the effect of medium-chain fatty acids and olive oil on weight of 31 participants over a 16-week weight loss. Two of the three subjects in the medium chain triglyceride (MCT) group with evidence of metabolic syndrome at the group's beginning no longer had symptoms 16-weeks later.
14. **Olive Oil:** high in antioxidants and monounsaturated fats and offers protection against heart disease.
15. **Chicken or turkey, skinless:** great lean protein and helps to keep you lean.
16. **Eggs:** excellent source of protein and helps to keep you lean.
17. **Salmon:** loaded with brain-boosting omega-3s.
18. **Shirataki Noodles:** from the root of a wild yam plant. They are high in fiber and low in calories.
19. **Green tea:** contains antioxidants and the metabolism-boosting compound epigallocatechin gallate; also contains L-theanine, which helps you relax and focus at the same time. Contains less caffeine than coffee.

Getting your diet right can benefit others, as well as yourself. In my experience, when you get your diet right it has the potential to carry over to help other people in your family, community, place of worship and

workplace. I have seen this repeatedly in my own practice and in my work with corporations and churches.

Readers – Have you developed ways to incorporate these healthy brain foods into your diet? Which is your favorite food on the list? Or maybe you have issues with food that keep you from eating the way you know you should. Leave a comment below, and let us know.

In brain health,

Daniel G. Amen, MD

-Dr. Daniel Amen

Dr. Amen is a psychiatrist and Founder of Amen Clinics in Newport Beach, San Francisco, Bellevue, WA, DC, Atlanta and New York. Amen Clinics have the world's largest database of brain scans relating to behavior. Dr. Amen is also the host of 7 popular shows about the brain, and he is the author of 55 professional articles, and over 30 books, including Change Your Brain, Change Your Life, Magnificent Mind At Any Age, Change Your Brain, Change Your Body, and Use Your Brain to Change Your Age. In February 2013, Crown published Dr. Amen's new book, Unleash the Power of the Female Brain.

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