

# Using your fork to renovate your brain

## *Practical Brain Nutrition*

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### **The Brain Villains: Refined Sugars and Oxidized Fats**

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The top two food groups that you want to significantly decrease or avoid are **refined sugars** and **oxidized fats**. Keep added sugars to less than 10 grams a day (2 teaspoons). Limit/avoid fried foods and foods cooked with oil.

Why?

1) Sugar without nutrients causes your neurons to work harder and produce more waste products as a result. Without the aid of cleansing phytonutrients, the sugar overstimulated neurons become more toxic.

2) Sugar creates inflammation – inflammation is like having a sunburn in your brain – it increases neuron dysfunction and irritability and decreases their productivity and vitality.

3) Sugar increases unhealthy bacteria in your gut that communicate with your brain and may contribute to craving more sugar: **Bacteria Brainwashing**

4) Oxidized Fats – **60% of your brain is made from fat**. A significant portion of the fat that you eat goes right to your brain and nervous system to create the outer part of your neurons - the parts that communicate with other neurons. If you consume oxidized fats your neurons use these damaged fats to make their outer lining which over time will impair their ability to talk to each other.

Over time chronic consumption of oxidized fats can contribute to premature neuron malfunction and death. An example of oxidation is when iron rusts and becomes brittle. You don't want rusty neurons.

5) Limit eating the black parts of grilled/fried/baked goods. Those toasty parts may have a seductive flavor, but they can wreak havoc on your nervous system. They can damage neurons and the blood vessels that support them. Over time the toxic chemicals that these types of foods contain can downgrade your brain's overall functionality.

By limiting or eliminating these problem foods your brain will work faster, better, and smarter.

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## **The Brain Heroes: Fruits, Vegetables, Healthy Fats**

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### BRAIN FRUITS

- All Berries
- Cherries
- Red and Black Grapes
- Red and Black Plums
- Pomegranate seeds (or 2oz of 100% juice)

These fruits have been shown to promote BDNF and other helpful compounds that act like brain fertilizer and stimulate your brain to grow and enhance its ability to make new connections. They also contain powerful phytochemicals called polyphenols that provide broad-spectrum benefits to your brain.

### BRAIN VEGGIES

Cruciferous vegetables:

- #1 Broccoli sprouts
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Baby bok choy
- Cabbages
- Radishes
- Kale
- Arugula

Cruciferous vegetables help your brain to detox and grow. They also help your liver detoxify many potential toxins that could injure your nervous system and help your body balance its estrogen which is important for both women and men and has a significant impact on brain function.

Cruciferous vegetables are most likely the most powerful foods to build a stronger and smarter immune system. They lower your risk of cancer more than any other food group (mushrooms and the onion family run closely behind).

Recently, new discoveries in neuroscience have demonstrated deeper communication links between your brain and your immune system than was previously thought. A healthy immune system = a stronger brain.

Lastly, cruciferous vegetables provide powerful sulfur compounds that help your neurons insulate themselves so that they can increase the rate that they communicate with each other up to 100X faster than without the insulation.

Green leafy vegetables:

- Spring mix greens,**
- All types of lettuces**
- Romaine lettuce**
- Arugula**
- Power greens**

Green leafy vegetables are the most densely nutritious foods on the planet. No diet or diet guru can refute that statement. All healthy diets recommend green leafy vegetables as the basis of what we should eat.

Greens help your brain detox and help it make powerful chemical messengers called neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine which can balance your emotions, improve your attention, and promote overall well-being.

Greens are densely packed with broad-spectrum phytonutrients and give your nervous system highly absorbable and usable folate. Most B-complex vitamins

contain synthetic folic acid which then needs to be converted to folate by your liver. Some scientific studies have evidence that chronic use of synthetic folic acid may increase the rate of certain types of cancer. Whole foods like greens do not contain folic acid but contain its reduced form, folate, which is a powerful cancer protector and helps create the building blocks for optimized neurotransmitter production and enhances the detoxification mechanisms in the brain.

## HEALTHY BRAIN FATS

Raw nuts and seeds:

- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Pistachios
- Chia/hemp/flax/sesame seeds
- Avocados
- Whole coconut

These healthy fats help neurons “talk” to each other better. They help create more myelin which is a mixture of proteins and fats that create an insulating sheath around many of your nerve fibers. This insulation helps many of your neurons send electrical messages to each other at max speeds (similar to how electronic wires have insulation around them so they conduct electricity faster).

If you want to upgrade your brain’s processing speeds stop eating fats cooked at high temperatures and refined sugar and eat the above. Over time your brain will thank you by improving your mood, increasing your verbal fluency, enhancing your processing speeds, and a lot more.

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## **Dr. Fuhrman’s Nutritarian Diet Style – The Basics**

*For more detailed information about the Nutritarian diet style I recommend reading his New York Times Best-Selling book: **Eat to Live.***

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## Nutritarian Principles

- **Health = Nutrients/Calories** - based on thousands of nutritional studies that demonstrate that increasing the micronutrient density of what you eat improves both your longevity and quality of life. The higher the nutrients per calorie a food contains the healthier it is (notable exceptions: healthy fats: nuts/seeds/avocado)
- **Know the Unlimited Foods** – These are the foods you can eat as much as you want. Instead of having a cheat day, which many diet books advocate, (which can lead to problematic binge eating patterns) the unlimited food list allows you to eat big and improve your health at the same time.

### The unlimited foods:

-All raw vegetables

-Cooked or raw green vegetables

-Non-starchy veggies (bell peppers, eggplant, summer squash, zucchini, onion family and mushrooms)

-3 power fruits (berries, cherries, pomegranate seeds)

-Legumes (beans, lentils)

Eat as much as you want of the unlimited foods. They load your body with life giving nutrients, are low in calories, and fill you up. Always pair these foods with healthy fats which will increase nutrient absorption by up to 900% and help promote true hunger satisfaction.

- **Remember: G-BOMBS** – the healthy food groups (Greens/Beans/Onions/Mushrooms/Berries/Seeds)
- **No Calorie Counting** – By eating the foods your body was designed to eat you will eventually regain your natural sensitivity and be guided back to your healthy body weight.

- **Toxic Hunger** - Don't be fooled by Toxic Hunger symptoms.

***Toxic Hunger Symptoms:***

Irritability  
Headaches  
Growling stomach  
Dizziness  
Light-headedness  
Sudden fatigue

The symptoms listed above are not true hunger signals but symptoms of withdrawal from a toxic diet (unless you have diabetes, on certain drugs, or have one of a few relatively rare medical conditions).

If you have been eating toxic foods, the toxins in those foods are stored mainly in your fat cells. Around 3 hours after your last meal, your body will start to burn its fat more readily. When your body starts to burn more of its fat, it releases the toxins from the fat cells back into your blood stream and your neurons react to those toxins with the **toxic hunger** symptoms listed above.

- **True Hunger:** Once you are eating a clean diet consistently, you will begin to experience what true hunger feels like. True hunger comes on gradually. The bodily sensations of true hunger generally are felt in the chest and throat area and not the belly. When you are experiencing true hunger, your sense of smell and taste are increased dramatically which makes food taste incredible. True hunger is not uncomfortable, like toxic hunger, and after you eat you feel more energetic and ready to tackle the rest of your day.
- **Taste Bud Upgrade:** Scientific studies demonstrate that as you clean up your diet, your taste buds can regain their innate sensitivity to the natural flavors in whole minimally-processed foods. Your ability to taste the subtle flavors of food goes up significantly (concentrated sweets, salt, and artificial flavors numb and desensitize our taste buds). Studies show that it takes

about 6 weeks of clean eating to restore the natural sensitivity of your taste buds. Once this happens natural foods begin to taste amazing and toxic foods begin to taste off, chemical-like, or too strong.

Once your taste buds return to their natural state eating a nutritarian-based diet-style becomes more pleasurable and satisfying. Your cravings towards processed food-drugs will also go down considerably and often are eliminated.

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## **Additional Brain-Boosting Nutritional Strategies**

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To help with gentle detoxification try not to eat within **2-3 hours** before going to bed. Our brains do most of their detoxification while sleeping and having less of our body's energies devoted to digestion while asleep will free up more energy towards detoxification and healing.

### **Intermittent Fasting**

Studies show that intermittent digestive rest **12 hours or more** per day can increase BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor) which acts like brain fertilizer and helps neurons grow and connect with each other. This can be done by ending your last meal by 8pm and then start eating again after 8am. Alternatively, you can do your digestive resting from 9pm – 9am and so on.

Going to bed comfortably on little to no food improves sleep quality and many clients over time require less sleep and feel more refreshed in the morning.

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## **The Brain-Boosting Diet Style Level 1 Prescription**

- Eat 1-2 servings of the 3 brain power fruit groups: berries (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, goji berries) cherries, pomegranate seeds (or 2oz of 100% juice) 6X a week

- Eat 1 serving of green vegetables 6x a week
  - Eat 1 serving of cruciferous vegetables 6x week
  - Eat 1 serving of raw nuts/seeds/avocados 6x a week
  - Eat ½ cup of beans and legumes 3x a week
  - Drink 1 **Green Power Smoothie** 3x a week
  - Reduce added sugar to less than 10 grams a day
  - Reduce/avoid foods cooked with oil (including olive oil – its benefits are destroyed when cooked)
  - Do not drink your calories and avoid diet drinks
  - Reduce/Eliminate foods with MSG (or its other forms like yeast extract), artificial flavorings, and colorings as these substances tend to make neurons more irritable
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### **How Your Brain Will Thank You**

Eating healthy, over time, turbo charges your body and your brain:

- Your neurons will be able work at a higher level allowing you to function at your best
  - Your memory will get stronger
  - Your ability to talk (verbal fluency) and find those words that are on the tip of your tongue but just can't get to will be well within your reach.
  - Your ability to handle stressful situations will improve and your emotions will be calmer and less irritable.
  - Overall you will feel better and perform better and have a higher quality life.
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### **Food Preparation and Cooking Strategies**

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#### **Helpful Cooking Tips and Strategies**

For lunches and dinners make large salads, stews, and soups that can be put into glass storage containers that you can have over several days to reduce the # of days that you prepare food.

For example, I generally cook a big dinner on Sunday that I use for dinner on Monday and Tuesday. I will purchase dinner on Weds and then cook again on Thursday to cover Friday and perhaps Saturday unless going out to dinner that night.

I will sometimes make quick salads/green-power smoothies and soups for lunch. If you are in a big hurry you can purchase some finger veggies like baby bok choy, bell peppers, carrots, and or finger fruits like apples, pears, kiwi, oranges, and then bag some raw nuts and seeds for the healthy fat.

I generally eat at a healthy convenient restaurant like Chipotle once a week and get double beans, double mild salsa, and guacamole and skip the cheese and sour cream. Pre-made soups like Imagine's Super Greens and Super Red Creamy soups can be heated up and put into a thermos for other quick meals with a small handful of raw nuts or seeds

[https://express.google.com/u/0/product/12508130238702741711\\_14380690956122254584\\_9359450?mall=Rockies3&directCheckout=1&utm\\_source=google\\_s hopping&utm\\_medium=product\\_ads&utm\\_campaign=gsx&dclid=CLS-6e688tgCFYeTZAodXrklGw](https://express.google.com/u/0/product/12508130238702741711_14380690956122254584_9359450?mall=Rockies3&directCheckout=1&utm_source=google_s hopping&utm_medium=product_ads&utm_campaign=gsx&dclid=CLS-6e688tgCFYeTZAodXrklGw))

### **Shift Away from Cooking Foods in Fat**

It's better to cook your food in water-based solutions such as broths or unsweetened unflavored nut milks and then add the nuts, seeds, avocado or a small amount of real unrefined extra virgin olive oil once the oven burner is turned off. Nuts and seeds can be made into butters and used as the fat source in salad dressings and sauces. Avocados can be mashed or blended into a dish to add a creamy final touch to dishes.

**Tip:** Always eat your fats with other vegetables and fruits never by themselves. For example, when you eat nuts/seeds take a portion out (the size of the palm of

your hand) and put them in oatmeal, fruit and vegetable salads, or any meal that you eat. You can use nut butters and mashed avocados to thicken sauces to give them more richness and body.

### **Always use Raw Nuts and Seeds**

Store bought roasted nuts/seeds generally contain oxidized fats which can be harmful for your brain. If you want roasted nuts and seeds, you can do so over low temperature either in your oven or in a non-stick pan over low-heat on the stove. I recommend eating them within 2-3 days after roasting them to minimize oxidation.

### **Quick Sauces**

One of my personal favorite quick sauces is to add mashed avocados into tomato sauce once the burner is turned off for a delicious creamy tomato sauce. Cook veggies in different broths (organic chicken, vegetable, beef) about ¼ to ½ inch around the pan and let reduce and add nut butters (almond, cashew, pecan) or stir in powdered nuts (almonds, walnuts, sesame seeds, pecans...) that you put into a coffee grinder:

[https://www.amazon.com/KRUPS-Electric-Grinder-Stainless-3-Ounce/dp/B00004SPEU/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?s=kitchen&ie=UTF8&qid=1516867109&sr=1-5&keywords=coffee+grinder](https://www.amazon.com/KRUPS-Electric-Grinder-Stainless-3-Ounce/dp/B00004SPEU/ref=sr_1_5?s=kitchen&ie=UTF8&qid=1516867109&sr=1-5&keywords=coffee+grinder) )

You can also add healthy dips, hummus, and salsa to create interesting sauces that taste great.

### **Quick Veggie Dips and Dressings**

Unsweetened salsas, low oil hummus like Cedar's Garlic Hummus and Trader Joe's Eggplant Hummus are quick veggie dips for when you don't have time to make your own. Thin them out with some unsweetened unflavored (do not use vanilla flavor) nut milks to thin out the hummus and turn it into a quick salad dressing.

### **Use More Herbs and Citrus**

Explore different herbs both fresh and dried and use more lemon and lime juice to give your dishes a pop of vibrant flavor without using chemical flavor enhancers used by many processed-food manufacturers known to promote overeating and irritate nerves.

**Experiment with Fresh Herbs:** parsley, cilantro, scallions, fresh mint and basil.

**Experiment with Dried Herbs:** thyme, rosemary, oregano and freeze-dried garlic and red onion (example: Littlehouse Freeze-Dried Garlic and Red Onion).

In general, use fresh herbs at the end of the cooking process once the heat is turned off and use dried herbs in the beginning of the cooking process. Herbs have special brain-enhancing phytochemicals called polyphenols shown in scientific studies to enhance brain function on multiple levels.

**Note:** The more natural unprocessed-foods you eat; the stronger your brain will become, the stronger you will feel, and a new sense of vitality will begin to emerge.

### **Remember that your taste buds will change**

Your taste buds will change over time (generally 6 weeks of clean eating) and natural foods will begin to taste better and better the more you eat them. The artificially sweetened foods filled with sugar will eventually taste sickeningly sweet and oily foods will taste greasy and heavy.

## **2 Recipes To Help Get you Started**

### **1) Berry Brain-Boosting Breakfast**

Eat breakfast at roughly the same time each day. Here is the basic formula:

- ¼-1/2 cup of oats
- 1 cup of berries/cherries/pomegranate seeds,
- palmful of raw nuts/seeds (walnuts/almonds/flax seeds/hemp seeds chia seeds)
- non-dairy unsweetened milk (almond/coconut/rice/cashew/soy)

-Eat 5X/6X a week.

Besides oats you can use different bases:

-Quinoa

-2-3 tablespoons of chia seeds that you bloom with warm water

-Unsweetened shredded coconut (available at Trader Joe's or Amazon.com)

-Avocado

You can mix and match the bases or eat the fruit with only nuts/seeds. If you are in a rush in the morning, you can put the oats/fruit/healthy fat together in a bowl, add the nutmilk and keep it in the fridge overnight. The oats will soften overnight and can be eaten without cooking (works best with rolled oats).

## **2) Green Power Smoothie**

Potent nutrient powerhouse - better than any supplement. One of the few recipes where many people feel better after having it once.

-5 oz of spring mix or other baby greens like power greens

-1/2 avocado

-Berries/cherries + sweeter fruit to taste (banana, pineapple, dates, etc.)

-Non-dairy unsweetened milk add as much as you want to achieve the desired thickness of the drink

-Drink 4x a week

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## **Brain-Boosting Diet Style – Psychological Strategies**

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### **Make this transition a learning experience**

It is quite common to go back and eat unhealthy processed foods from time to time. Particularly during times of increased stress, times of increased anger or sadness, and days when we don't sleep well.

Don't beat yourself up, we all do this from time to time. If you have a lapse and ate something that you didn't want to eat at a time when you were vulnerable,

learn from the experience. Note the factors that increased your vulnerability and susceptibility to food cravings. Keep a journal and come up with ways to optimize your environment to support your new diet-style.

### **The Inner Critic and the Blame Game**

Those who are successful in transforming their eating habits use the times when they eat in an unhealthy manner by learning more about their common triggers (i.e. lack of sleep, increased stress, anger, sadness, loneliness) and the types of environments that lead to unhealthy eating. Over time they figure out ways to optimize their environment and not fall prey to their triggers. Importantly, they learn not to listen to their inner critic that may try to make them feel badly and guilty when they have a lapse.

Scientific studies show that the people who experience the most guilt when trying to change their diet-style are the ones who are most likely to quit. Guilt does not keep us in-line, it generally sabotages our efforts to make effective long-lasting change.

Beating yourself up weakens your willpower and lowers your confidence to take on the challenge of learning to eat healthy in a world loaded with booby-traps to seduce you into eating unhealthy foods. You will cheat from time to time. We all do. In order to succeed, don't let your inner-critic get the upper hand. Learn to cultivate your inner wise and kind voice and let it guide you instead.

People who successfully change their diet-style realize that the inner critic will pop up from time to time, but they soon discover how unhelpful listening to the inner critic is and journal about their lapses. By doing so, they begin to understand which types of patterns trigger them to eat in ways that are not in service to their mind and bodies and learn how to make the appropriate adjustments to decrease the chances of them eating in a detrimental way. Over time they recognize that playing the blame game is an unwinnable double bind that always ends up with them on the losing end.

### **Sleep and Appetite**

Be mindful on days when you don't sleep well. Lack of quality sleep is a major trigger to consume high calorie foods - most often simple carbohydrates such as refined sugar, bread, and chips.

Sleep deprivation also lowers will power, increases impulsivity, and decreases good judgment. Make sure that on the days you don't sleep well you avoid places and people you normally would need to use your willpower in order to not consume disease-promoting foods.

### **Break Free and Feel Great**

When you eat skillfully you will break free from food addictions, extinguish uncomfortable food cravings, and experience the feeling of true nourishment.

True nourishment feels like stable vital energy and a greater sense of power and confidence to take on the challenges of the day.

Eating healthy is a learning process. It will be challenging at times. Remember that no one is perfect. Keep increasing your knowledge and skills and with time you will get the hang of it. The result of this will be completely renovating your brain and your body which will profoundly improve your mind and your overall quality of life. What could be more rewarding than that.