



The summer holidays are over and its time to go back to school and university. Did you know that what you eat can affect your concentration and learning skills which

are needed to get those grades you want. It is so important to get a balance of protein and high fiber carbohydrate for each meal and to make sure that you eat evenly throughout the day to avoid any energy crashes. Your brain uses a large percentage of any fats you eat and the right type can help your brain work more efficiently.

Brain Boosting Meals

Healthy Breakfast Bowl

Ingredients:

Hemp Milk

Banana

Flavoured Bio Yogurt

Different Fruits (e.g forest fruits, apple, peaches)

Muesli (with nuts and seeds)

Method

1. Mash up a banana
2. Mix in the yogurt and a dash of hemp milk
3. Chop up and add the fruit you fancy
4. Add 1-2 handfuls of muesli
5. Mix together if desired

Porridge is also very good for slow release of energy, for ease use something like Oat so Simple sachets, add milk and cook in the microwave for 1 minute. Fruits (especially



What are the benefits of these foods?

Salmon contains beneficial fish oils and is a good source of protein. In terms of energy it is classed as an A-grade food, meaning it is most effective at providing energy for longer and avoiding energy crashes. It also contains the amino acid, tryptophan, which the brain uses to regulate sleep meaning you'll be able to recharge your batteries more efficiently. Furthermore it contains brain boosting fats essential for learning and memory.

Eggs are also classed as an A-grade energy food. They contain a B vitamin, choline, that brain cells require for quicker transmission of information.

Bio yogurt releases its energy slowly throughout the day to maintain a more constant energy level which will aid concentration (especially good if the

stewed) stirred in are really tasty.

Super Brainy Scrambled Eggs

For breakfast, lunch or dinner!

Ingredients:

1 to 2 Organic Large Eggs

Milk of your choice

Butter

Wholemeal Bread

Add cooked vegetables if having for dinner

Method

1. Crack the eggs in a microwave proof bowl (e.g glass)
2. Add a splash of milk
3. Beat with a fork or whisk until well combined
4. Put into microwave
5. Cook on high for 1 min
6. Take out and stir with a fork
7. Cook again on high for 30 secs
8. Butter the toast
9. Season to taste
10. And eat with the eggs

Quick and Healthy Stir Fry

Ingredients:

Bite size Salmon (frozen or fresh) or Chicken or Tofu pieces

Packet of mixed Stir Fry Vegetables

Cashew Nuts

Sunflower Seeds

Brown Basmati Rice or Noodles

Garlic

Soy Sauce

Method

1. Add for 1 person 2oz of rice to boiling water in a large pan
2. Simmer for 15 minutes
3. Put a teaspoon of olive oil into a wok and gently cook the salmon/chicken/tofu
4. After 10 minutes add in the stir fry vegetables
5. Stir through the nuts and seeds
6. After 5 minutes add the garlic and soy sauce
7. Cook until steaming but vegetables still al-dente
8. Serve with the drained brown rice.

Nutritional Research - why we must eat breakfast!

The composition of your breakfast can affect your performance through out the day as glucose is the brains major source of energy and it is vital for all brain processes that we need through the day. The measurement of how fast a food is converted into sugar and enters into the blood stream is called the glycaemic index. The amount of food needed to raise the blood sugars significantly is called the glycaemic load. The cognition and mood of school children was measured after eating meals both with differing values of glycaemic index and glycaemic load.

yogurt is sugar free). It also contains potassium which promotes calmness.

Sunflower seeds are generally a very good food. They are also A-grade energy foods and contain B vitamins. If your child suffers from hyperactivity or lack of concentration sunflower seeds are good because they contain magnesium which is calming.

Tofu is a source of protein and will slow down the release of sugars from the whole meal making successful blood-sugar management more likely.

Garlic has been called 'nature's own antibiotic' and is great for boosting the immune system, very useful for avoiding sniffles and colds during stressful times such as the exam period.

Oats (and so porridge) contain B-complex vitamins which are good for memory maintenance and the production of cellular energy especially in brain cells.

Bananas are the healthy mars bar and contain potassium as well as magnesium helping to maintain calmness and reduce hyperactivity. They promote sleep so replenishing your energy will be easier.

Wholegrain bread contains vitamin B5 which is not present in white bread. Vitamin B5 is essential for memory, other featured foods which contain it are eggs, chicken, sunflower seeds and salmon.



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The low GL (low sugar, slow release foods) meals gave the children the a greater feeling of happiness and alertness and they were less nervous and thirsty. The higher GI breakfasts gave more confidence and less sluggishness but they were more hungry and thirsty (very relevant if a child is hyperactive!)

The high GI breakfasts gave increased levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, which the high GL breakfasts didn't-this is because the high GL sugar release is lower and lasts alot longer. The high GI gives a peak in blood sugar levels which is stressful to both the body and brain. A low GI breakfast gave better declarative verbal memory and the high GL gave better vigilance.

On balance the research showed that a low GI and high GL breakfast (eg porridge or wholemeal toast and eggs) may improve learning and advises that education policies are made to recommend this for implementation.

Reference: *Glycaemic index and glycaemic load of breakfast predict cognitive function and mood in school children: a randomised controlled trial*, British Journal of Nutrition, FirstView Article, by Dr Renata Micha, Peter J Rodgers and Michael Nelson, Published 08 June 2011 online.

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