

# Brain Fuel

**Andrew Fuller**

---

Your brain runs best when you give it the best fuel. If you don't eat right your brain is like a car full of the wrong sort of petrol chugging up the hills and needing more revving to get going.

## **Brains need breakfast.**

The research is in: if you want to do well at school and in life you have to eat breakfast.

Breakfast eaters get 40 % higher marks in maths. People who eat breakfast are less likely to be absent from school and are less likely to be late to school.

Studies indicate that non-breakfast eaters are twice as likely to be depressed, four times as likely to suffer anxiety and 30 % more likely to be hyperactive.

Having a higher protein- lower carbohydrate mix for breakfast enhances concentration and memory. So avoid lots of sugary cereals, juices and heaps of toast and get some eggs, milk and porridge or bacon in.

## **Sugary drinks give you the wrong sort of buzz.**

Firstly they make you sick. Just two soft drinks (75 grams of glucose) results in the free radical production of damaged fatty acids called isoprostanes to rise by 34% in just 90 minutes after consumption,

Secondly, they make you stressed. One study at Yale University gave 25 healthy children the same amount of sugar found in one soft drink and found that their adrenaline levels were boosted to more than 5 times normal levels for up to 5 hours later.

## **Neuro-nutrition**

You don't need to reach for the medicine cabinet every time you want to feel better. Often making sure you get some exercise, sleep well and eat well can make an amazing difference to how switched on you feel.

## **Foods that improve your mood, sleep and calmness**

These are foods that have relatively high levels of the amino acid, L- tryptophan.

L- tryptophan synthesises in your brain into serotonin the most powerful anti-depressant known to humankind.

It also makes you sweeter, calmer and helps you to sleep better. The foods that are rich in L- tryptophan include:

Turkey	Lean Beef
Almonds	Milk
Whole wheat	Pumpkin seeds
Cottage Cheese	Omega 3 fatty acids
Soybeans	

## **Food that improve happiness, concentration and motivation.**

Tyrosine is the amino acid that synthesises in your brain to create dopamine. Dopamine is the neuro-chemical related to motivation and concentration. It helps you to feel pumped and raring to go.

The foods that are rich in tyrosine include:

Fish	Oats
Dairy	Chicken
Yoghurt	Milk

## **It don't mean a thing if you ain't got that zing!**

Give yourself an energy boost by eating foods that are rich in the amino acid, L-phenaline. This amino acid synthesises into noreprinephrine and dopamine. Not only will having more of these neuro-chemicals improve your get up and go, it will also be good for your memory.

Food that are rich in L-phenaline include:

Lima beans	Sesame seeds
Peanuts	Chicken
Yoghurt	Milk

## **Keep your sunny side up!**

Foods that decrease irritability and tension are high in L-glutamine. L-glutamine synthesises in the brain into GABA or *Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid*.

Foods that are rich sources of L-glutamine include:

Eggs	Peaches
Grape Juice	Avocado
Sunflower seeds	Granola
Peas	

## **Help your brain to learn**

Choline synthesises in the brain into acetylcholine. When you learn something new, your brain forms a new link or circuit between brain cells. These new links use acetylcholine to form and they are then re-inforced by dopamine.

Acetylcholine not only helps us to learn it also protects our cells and our memory. Foods that are rich in choline include:

Egg yolk	Beef Liver
Beef	Cauliflower
Navy beans	Tofu
Almonds.	

## **Use your pantry to keep yourself well.**

While we are considering what foods help us to perform at our best we should also discuss anti-angiogenic foods. These are foods that seem to play a role in limiting the pathologic formation of new blood vessels (angiogenesis) associated with many human illnesses.

Anti-angiogenic foods you should consider having more of in your diet include:

Almonds	Apples
Artichokes	Blackberries
Blueberries	Bok Choy
Cherries	Chocolate (dark)
Garlic	Ginseng
Grapefruit	Green tea
Kale	Lemons
Mushrooms	Nutmeg
Olive Oil	Oranges
Parsley	Pineapple
Pumpkin	Raspberries
Red grapes	Salmon
Sea Cucumber	Soy beans
Strawberries	Tomato
Tuna	Turmeric
Walnuts	

Eating a balanced healthy diet makes an enormous difference to how well people do at school.

If you want to hear a fascinating lecture about anti-angiogenic foods go to [http://www.ted.com/talks/william\\_li.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/william_li.html)

Note:

**The food suggestions in this newsletter are general in nature. If you or your child has food allergies or illnesses, it is recommended that you seek the opinion of a health profession before altering your diet.**