

Foods in moderation

- Added sugar and refined carbohydrates
 - Foods that are high in added sugar include:
 - Sugary cereals
 - Soft drinks and sports drinks
 - Fast foods
 - Sweets
 - Refined carbohydrates are found in processed grains like white flour and elevate our blood sugar levels.
 - High blood sugar levels can cause issues with:
 - Memory
 - Learning
 - Mood, following a “sugar crash”
 - Foods high in added sugar may feel good temporarily; however, they lead to a drop in sugar levels once the “high” of the sugar crash wears off.
 - Following this sudden drop in sugar levels in our brains, we might be irritable or fatigued.
- Trans Fats
 - Some fats are healthy; however, trans fats are usually industrially produced and unnatural.
 - These are foods that contain hydrogenated vegetable oil, like:
 - Margarine
 - Snack foods
 - Frosting
 - Packaged cookies
 - Unhealthy fats add a lot of calories to our diet with little benefits to our brain health. These fats can “take away” from us making healthier choices to choose healthier options.
- Processed foods
 - These are foods that are pre-packaged and require little to no preparation to consume, like:
 - Prepared sauces
 - Instant or microwavable meals
 - Snack foods like chips and sweets can also be considered processed.
 - Foods that are highly processed often add fats, sugars, and salt for taste.
 - They are high in calories and low in nutrients, meaning that they have “empty calories.” They may fulfill our daily caloric needs; however, they offer little else.
 - The added fat, sugar, and salt, and lack of nutrients, can affect:
 - Learning ability
 - Brain “plasticity” (the brain’s ability to repair and rewire itself when we are learning new skills or developing).

Try to limit these foods, as they add unnecessary and unhealthy chemicals. For increased brain functioning and optimal cognitive functioning, try adding some of the following to your diet. Substitute some of the unhealthy choices for these foods:

Healthy Foods

- Green leafy vegetables
 - Foods like spinach and kale
 - They are high in magnesium, which may help to calm our nerves, fight depression, and minimize occurrences of migraines.
- Broccoli
 - High in Vitamin K
 - Helps to improve our cognitive skills
- Avocados
 - Also high in vitamin K
 - Helps to improve memory and concentration
- Almonds
 - High in omega-3 fatty acids
 - Fats are necessary to a balanced diet
 - Substitute trans fats with healthy fats from almonds and other nuts
- Fish
 - Fish are high in healthy, omega-3 fatty acids
 - Omega-3 fatty acids help to heal the nerves and the nervous system
- Eggs
 - High in Vitamin B
 - Improves communication among brain cells
 - Helps to improve our memory