

THE NOURISHED BRAIN

THE LATEST SCIENCE ON FOOD'S POWER
FOR PROTECTING THE BRAIN FROM ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA

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Following a brain-healthy diet is not hard to do. The previous chapters have laid the groundwork of what foods are the most healthy and most harmful to your brain and why. All you need to do is decide what foods go on your plate, and when you have chosen well, the nutrients essential for preserving cognitive function, will do their part. The good thing about this way of eating is that you do not need to worry about counting calories or grams of specific nutrients (unless you have a disease such as diabetes).

The Essentials of Meal Planning

One of the best tools everyone single one of us can do to enhance our overall health is to plan our meals. Anyone who flies by the seat of their pants with no idea of what to have for dinner whenever 5 pm rolls around, likely will resort to fast food as the answer. Convenient, yes, but night after night of picking up dinner at a drive-thru window is no friend to your health, particularly your brain health.

Meal planning may sound old-fashioned but it has become more in-fashion as an excellent means of eating a balanced diet and for meeting your nutritional needs. And what every seasoned meal planner will tell you, meal planning also saves you time and money.

When you take some time to plan meals for the week, you already know what your meals will look like and what foods you need to buy. A good spin-off of meal planning is taking your grocery list with you when buying food which automatically reduces impulse purchases.

Meal Planning Basics

This is where the fun begins and yes, meal planning can be fun and enjoyable. Whether you are a Martha Stewart or Julia Child in the kitchen or more of a beginner, planning meals can be as simple or elaborate as you want. Here's how to start:

- Ask your family to suggest meal ideas.
- For inspiration, flip through cookbooks or check out recipe websites. There are even sample menus and menu-planning apps online.

- Home cooking doesn't have to be elaborate. Focus on a handful of recipes that you can rotate through for most of your meals.
- Cooking from scratch can get healthy meals on the table but so can taking shortcuts. For instance, pair home-cooked foods with healthy store-bought staples to save on time without compromising on nutrition. Think pasta with marinara sauce in a jar, soup with canned beans, or pre-chopped spinach and rotisserie chicken with prewashed greens.
- Most people who practice meal planning only plan their main meal each day. If dinner is the main meal for your family, then plan 5-7 dinner meals for the week. Or, if you have more time, you can plan breakfast, lunch and dinner for as many days a week as you want.
- Plan a week of meals at a time. Start with the entrée or main dish and include side dishes to go along with it.
- Once your menu ideas are filled in, create a shopping list of the ingredients you'll need.
- Coordinate your meal planning with other activities and meetings you have throughout each week. Check your calendar to decide which nights you will only have time to reheat leftovers.
- To keep meal planning entertaining and rewarding, think seasonal. What fresh produce is available at certain times of the year? Is it salad weather or soup season?
- Mix things up by planning meatless meals or trying out new recipes and old favorites.
- Keep a visual in your mind of what each meal will look like on your plate. Are there sufficient colors and textures or is everything you planned bland and uninteresting ?
- Planning meals around themes helps make the planning process flow. For example, maybe Monday nights are always pasta night and Thursday nights are always fish night. Or, one night can be designated "cook's choice." Use

that night to clean out your refrigerator by making a stir-fry, omelets, or chef salad.

- The nice thing about meal planning is that you can recycle your plans.
- Most of all learn to be flexible. Even your best thought out plans can get disrupted as no meal plan is set in stone.

One of the best ways to keep your meal planning organized is to download or create a meal plan template. Here is one example of a brain-healthy foods menu for one week could look like for you and your family:

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
MONDAY	Greek yogurt with berries and walnuts, cubed cantaloupe	Veggie Split Pea Soup (pg 96), leafy green salad	Mediterranean salmon (pg 84), brown rice with beans, baked apple with cherries and almonds	Tangerine slices and popcorn
TUESDAY	Whole grain cereal with milk, fruit	Vegetable pasta primavera (pg 88), blackberries or strawberries	Walnut-crusted chicken (pg 81), baked sweet potato, broccoli	Unsalted almonds, fresh veggies with hummus
WEDNESDAY	Grab-n-go mini breakfast casseroles (pg 79) with orange slices	Tuna or salmon edamame salad with pita bread	Beef top sirloin and fruit kabobs (pg 83), grilled corn	Blueberries or blackberries with walnuts and cashew sweet cream (pg 107)
THURSDAY	Berry banana smoothie with whole grain toast	Mixed leafy greens, pecans, pumpkin seeds, dried cranberries	Baked halibut, wheat berry salad, asparagus	Sliced apples with cubed cheese
FRIDAY	Scrambled eggs, oatmeal with berries	Turkey sandwich, cut raw veggies like carrots and zucchini, strawberries	Roasted chicken, broccoli and barley pilaf, sautéed leafy greens	Bean dip with whole grain crackers

How to Eyeball the Perfect Portion Size of Food

It's one thing to know how to meal plan but it's also wise to know what a proper portion size of food should look like. Portion distortion, mainly due to huge restaurant portion sizes distorting our view of what a normal amount of food should be, has been a problem for decades.

Below is a table showing types of food and how to use visuals keeping your portions sizes reasonable to enhance your health:

Food	Serving Size
Vegetables	1 cup fresh leafy greens, ½ cup cooked leafy greens, ½ cup other vegetables
Fruit	½ cup fresh berries, 1 small piece of fruit, ¼ cup dried fruit
Whole grains	½ cup cooked
Nuts	¼ cup or 1 ounce
Beans	½ cup cooked
Fish, Poultry, Red Meat	3 ounces
Olive oil	1 tablespoon
Cheese	1 ounce
Milk, Yogurt	1 cup

When it comes to estimating portions, visual cues help. When filling your plate, picture these items to remind you of proper serving sizes:

- **Vegetables (raw leafy vegetables, 2 cups; cooked leafy vegetables or other vegetables, ½ cup):**
For one cup – A tennis ball
For ½ cup – Half of a tennis ball
- **Fruit (dried fruit, ¼ cup, fresh or frozen, ½ cup):**
For ¼ cup – A ping pong ball or a large egg
For ½ cup – Half of a tennis ball
- **Grains (pasta, rice, cereal, cooked grains, ½ cup):**
Half of a tennis ball
- **Nuts – (¼ cup):**
Shot glass
Medium egg

- **Beans – (½ cup):**
Half of a tennis ball
- **Protein (meat, fish, poultry, 3 ounces):**
Smartphone
Palm of your hand (no fingers)
Deck of cards
- **All oils – (1 tablespoon):**
The size of one thumb where it bends to the tip
- **Cheese – (1 ounce):**
A pair of dice
- **Milk, yogurt – (1 cup):**
A tennis ball

Stocking a Brain-Healthy Kitchen

To feed your brain what it needs for improved cognitive functioning, brain-enhancing foods need to be on hand in your kitchen. What you buy at the grocery store, bring home, and then store in your pantry, refrigerator and freezer, will be the base of what you have to work with so choose wisely. When nourishing, healthy foods are already on hand, it takes out much of the guesswork and uncertainty of what to have for meals. Here is a good start of foods to have available:

In Your Cupboards and Pantry

Vegetables - Canned vegetables such as green beans, corn, and tomatoes (whole, diced, crushed, pureed, or made into a paste)

Fruit – Canned fruit (unsweetened or packed with water or own juice) such as peaches, pears, apricots, and applesauce

Beans – Canned or dried beans – such as black, butter, cannellini, chickpeas, fava, great northern, kidney, lima, navy, pinto, red, and white; also soybeans, peas, and lentils

Nuts – Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts

Seeds – Chia, flaxseed, pumpkin, sesame, and sunflower seeds

Fish – Canned tuna, salmon, anchovy, sardines, and herring

Oils – Extra-virgin olive oil, canola, corn, cottonseed, grapeseed, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, sunflower, and walnut.

Whole grains – Amaranth, barley, buckwheat, brown and wild rice, bulgur, corn, farro, freekeh, kamut berries, kaniwa, millet, oats, popcorn, quinoa, rye, sorghum, spelt, teff, triticale, and wheat berries.

In Your Freezer

Vegetables – Broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, corn, edamame, green beans, kale, peas, and spinach

Fruit – Blueberries, raspberries, mangoes, strawberries (unsweetened), and tart cherries

Nuts – Nuts can go rancid quickly due to their high oil content. It's recommended to store nuts in the freezer if you don't plan on using them right away. To freeze peanuts, walnuts, almonds, pecans, cashews, macadamia nuts, and hazelnuts, wrap well in plastic, then place in a resealable freezer bag.

Meat – Have on hand lean red meat, poultry without the skin and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids

All fish, poultry and red meat not being used right away should be stored in the freezer

In Your Refrigerator

Vegetables – Artichokes, asparagus, beets, green beans, bell peppers, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cut vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, peas, radishes, sprouts, summer squashes, sweet corn, and all leafy greens.

Certain vegetables are best kept out of the refrigerator including onions, potatoes, garlic, and tomatoes. Refrigeration can damage the quality of their taste of these vegetables when cooked due to the changes that occur in the composition of the carbohydrate they contain.

As long as these vegetables are whole and freshly harvested or picked up at the grocery store, they shouldn't go into the refrigerator as they may

also need more time to ripen. However, once these particular vegetables have been cut, then store in the refrigerator for food safety.

To properly store onions and garlic, place in separate mesh bags, a wire basket or a crate allowing air circulation, in a cool, dry location such as a basement (32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit). Potatoes are best kept in a well-ventilated container and stored in a dry location away from sunlight at temperatures between 45 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Ripe tomatoes should be kept at room temperature away from sunlight.

Fruit – All berries, apples, apricots, figs, grapes, and any cut fruit.

Veggie Scrambled Eggs with Cheese

Looking for something different besides cold cereal or toast? Here's a breakfast that has it all – protein, veggies and a side of fruit. This quick, easy, and filling start to your day is a delicious way to nourish your brain. Breakfast can be a difficult meal to get in veggies but this recipe makes it super easy.

Brain-boosting ingredients: eggs and veggies

Brain-boosting nutrients: protein, vitamins A and C, antioxidants and fiber

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons butter
 - 5 eggs
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 2 cups washed baby spinach, chopped
 - 3 green onions, thinly sliced, both green and white part
 - 12 cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered
 - 2 tablespoons chopped basil
 - ½ cup grated cheese – your choice
1. Preheat skillet over medium-high heat and add butter to melt.
 2. Whisk eggs together in a bowl, season with salt and pepper.
 3. Add spinach and green onion to preheated skillet. Sauté until spinach is slightly wilted, less than 1 minutes.
 4. Add egg mixture to pan, stir constantly. When eggs are almost set, add cherry tomatoes, basil and cheese. Continue to stir constantly to mix ingredients.
 5. When eggs are set, remove from pan, garnish with additional shredded cheese and serve immediately.

*Nutrition: 138 calories, 10 g total fat, 4 g saturated fat,
10 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber.*

Servings – 2; Serving size: 1 cup





Walnut Crusted Chicken Breast Tenders

Who would guess that chicken and walnuts is quite the nutrition-powered combo. Poultry provides high-quality protein as well as iron, zinc, and vitamin B12 essential for brain health. Walnuts are packed with omega-3 fatty acids, giving both a brain and heart boost. The walnut-based coating adds richness to this light breading keeping the chicken moist and delicious.

Brain-boosting foods – chicken, walnuts, and 100% whole wheat bread

Brain-boosting nutrients – iron, zinc, vitamin B12, omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and protein

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 slices 100% whole-wheat bread, dried
- ½ cup walnuts
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs
- About 1 pound chicken breast tenders
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. In a food processor or blender, combine bread, walnuts, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. Process until fine breadcrumbs form. Transfer to a shallow bowl.
3. Beat eggs in a separate shallow bowl until mixed
4. Dip each chicken tender into egg mixture, let excess drip off, and then dip into crumb mixture, covering tenders completely.
5. Place tenders side-by-side in a baking dish sprayed with cooking oil. Place in oven and bake for approximately 45 minutes.

*Nutrition: 375 calories, 23 g total fat, 5 g saturated fat, 28 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fiber.
Servings 4; Serving size – 3 ounces*

LUNCH AND DINNER



Mediterranean Salmon

For anyone who may be intimidated to cook fish, here is a fearless recipe making it super easy. Not only will you be fixing a delicious, gourmet meal but it's a dinner that can be on your table in just 20 minutes. As you eat this flavor-filled salmon, you can also enjoy knowing you're getting a great source of monounsaturated fat and brain-boosting omega-3 fatty acids.

*Brain-boosting food –
salmon and olive oil*

*Brain-boosting nutrients –
omega-3 fatty acids, protein,
monounsaturated fat,
vitamin B12, potassium, and
antioxidants*

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 4 cloves garlic, pressed
- 4 3-ounce salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoon garlic salt





1. Mix together olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a small bowl.
2. Arrange salmon fillets in a shallow baking dish. Rub pressed garlic onto the fillets, then pour the vinegar and oil over them, turning once to coat.
3. Season with cilantro, basil, and garlic salt. Set aside to marinate for 10 minutes.
4. Preheat oven's broiler. Place the salmon about 6 inches from the heat source and broil for 15 minutes, turning once or until browned on both sides and easily flaked with a fork.
5. Brush occasionally with the sauce from the pan.

LUNCH AND DINNER

Nutrition: 236 calories, 12 g total fat, 4 g saturated fat, 30 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber. Servings – 4; Serving size – 3–4 ounce fillets

***Recipe courtesy of Dr. David B. Samadi,
Urologic Oncologist Expert and
Renowned Robotic Surgeon
www.samadimd.com
www.prostatecancer911.com
www.roboticoncology.com***

Chia Seed Blueberry Banana Muffins

Moist, not too sweet, a nice blend of two fruits, and an interesting “crunch” courtesy of the chia seeds, this muffin has it all. Better yet, it provides several brain-boosting nutrients making this muffin a nutrient dense addition to any meal or snack.

Brain-boosting foods: blueberries, banana, chia seeds, and whole wheat flour

Brain-boosting nutrients: omega-3 fatty acids, protein, fiber, vitamin C, fiber, lutein, and antioxidants

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 banana
- 1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- ½ to ¾ cup blueberries (frozen or fresh)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Mix oil, egg and sugar in a large mixing bowl until smooth; add in banana mixing well.
3. Blend the dry ingredients well in a separate bowl – flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and chia seeds
4. Add dry ingredients to oil mixture. Add in blueberries and Vanilla. Gently stir together just until moistened – do not overmix.
5. Spoon batter into muffin tin tray sprayed with vegetable pan spray.
6. Bake 15 to 20 minutes.

Nutrition: 135 calories, 3 g total fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 2 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber. Servings – 12 muffins; Serving size – 1 muffin



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