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Top Foods to Add Years of Healthy Life

By Dr. Mercola | November 6th, 2017

A foundational recommendation for healthy eating is simply to eat REAL food. To protect your health, I advise spending at least 90 percent of your food budget on whole foods, and only 10 percent, or less, on processed foods.

As a quick aside, while food selection is foundational for health, it's important to realize that certain lifestyle choices have an equal if not greater impact. Four of the most important lifestyle strategies to protect your health are:

- **Fasting**; intermittent fasting and/or multiday water fasts
- **Sleep**. Every single organ in your body has a biological clock that needs to be synced to the master circadian clock in your brain. These body clocks regulate everything from metabolism to psychological functioning. Over the long term, skimping on sleep (which is a surefire way to dysregulate your circadian clock) can contribute to a whole host of chronic health problems
- **Sensible sun exposure**, as this is the primary and most efficient way to optimize your vitamin D level
- **Avoiding electromagnetic field exposure** from cellphones, tablets, routers, laptops and other electric and magnetic fields, as this radiation activates voltage-gated calcium channels in the membrane of your cells. As a result of this activation, extremely potent oxidant stressors and reactive free radicals are produced, capable of causing severe harm

Top Six Foods for Your Brain

That said, let's return to the topic at hand. These are my top picks when it comes to foods that nourish your brain, heart, gut, muscles, immune system and more. Can you boost your brainpower with the foods you eat? You bet. Topping the list of brain-boosting superfoods are foods high in healthy fats. This should come as no surprise considering your brain is mainly made up of fats.

1. Avocados are a great source of healthy oleic acid (monounsaturated fat, which is also found in olive oil), which helps decrease inflammation. Avocados have also been shown to effectively combat nearly every aspect of metabolic syndrome, a risk factor of dementia and most other chronic disease. Aside from providing healthy fats, avocados also provide nearly 20 essential nutrients, including potassium, which helps balance your vitally important potassium to sodium ratio.

2. Organic coconut oil. Besides being excellent for your thyroid and your metabolism, its medium-chain fatty acids (MCTs) are a source of ketone bodies, which act as an alternate source of brain fuel that can help prevent the brain atrophy associated with dementia. MCTs also impart a number of health benefits, including raising your body's metabolism and fighting off pathogens.

3. Grass fed butter and ghee. About 20 percent of butterfat consists of short- and medium-chain fatty acids, which are used right away for quick energy and therefore don't contribute to fat levels in your blood. Therefore, a significant portion of the butter you consume is used immediately for energy, similar to a carbohydrate. Ghee, which has a higher smoke point than butter, is a healthy fat particularly well-suited for cooking. It also has a longer shelf life.

4. Organic pastured eggs. Many of the healthiest foods are rich in cholesterol and saturated fats, and eggs are no exception. Cholesterol is needed for the regulation of protein pathways involved in cell signaling and other cellular processes. It's particularly important for your brain, which contains about 25 percent of the cholesterol in your body.

5. Wild-caught Alaskan salmon. While most fish suffer drawbacks related to contamination, wild-caught Alaskan salmon and other small, fatty fish, such as sardines and anchovies, are still noteworthy for their health benefits in light of their low risk of contamination.

6. Organic raw nuts such as macadamia and pecans. Macadamia nuts have the highest fat and lowest protein and carb content of any nut, and about 60 percent of the fat is the monounsaturated fat oleic acid. This is about the level found in olives, which are well-known for their health benefits.

A single serving of macadamia nuts also provides 58 percent of what you need in manganese and 23 percent of the recommended daily value of thiamin. Pecans are a close second to macadamia nuts on the fat and protein scale, and they also contain anti-inflammatory magnesium, heart healthy oleic acid, phenolic antioxidants and immune-boosting manganese.