



Boost your brain health

With food, exercise and activities

Food

A diet that contains healthy nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, is beneficial for brain health. Such a diet improves the formation of neurons and leads to improved thinking, attention, and memory. In sum, a healthy diet makes the brain happy, so we should all pay attention to what we eat. Below are just a few:

- **Beets.** Beets are high in antioxidants and nitrates. The former can prevent cancer and help the liver detoxify the blood, while the latter increase blood flow to the brain. Beets help the brain to think clearly and increase attention span.
- **Avocado.** Avocado is a superfood high in monounsaturated fats. These healthy fats keep blood sugar at a steady level and help keep skin, hair, and nails looking and feeling healthy. More importantly, avocados are rich in folate and vitamin K, which improve cognitive brain functions such as concentration and memory.
- **Broccoli.** Broccoli is high in both choline and vitamin K. These nutrients contribute to memory function and focus. This veggie also has a lot of vitamin C and fiber.

Exercise

What you might not realize is that with every step you take, every mile you pedal or every lap you swim, you're enhancing your cognitive fitness. Yes. That's right. Moving your body can help your brain work better. An increase in blood flow is not only extremely beneficial, it is essential. Exercise induces good blood flow to deliver all the nutrients required to carry out the brain's job, while it also increases production molecules important to brain function, including memory.

Activities

Any mentally stimulating activity will help to build brain health. Read, take courses, try "mental gymnastics," such as word puzzles or math problems. Experiment with things that require manual dexterity as well as mental effort, such as drawing, painting and other crafts.

Click on the link below to access some adult coloring pages. Improve your brain health and have fun!

<https://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/adult-coloring-pages/>



Superfood of the Month: Artichoke

What is it?

The globe artichoke, also known by the names French artichoke and green artichoke in the U.S., is a variety of a species of thistle cultivated as food. The edible portion of the plant consists of the flower buds before the flower comes into bloom.

What do I do with it?

Preparing an artichoke for the first time can be daunting, but don't let it intimidate you! Artichokes are usually steamed but they can also be boiled, grilled or roasted. Once you prepare the artichoke by trimming the stem and leaves, you can boil them in a large pot of water for about 35-45 minutes until the leaves and stem are tender.

Steamed artichokes have three edible parts: the leaves, the stem and the heart. To eat the leaves, you peel them off one by one and scrape off the tender meat with your teeth, discarding the tough, fibrous shell. They are tasty on their own but melted butter or a dipping sauce really takes the flavor to another level.

Why should I eat it?

Artichokes are packed with powerful nutrients. Artichokes are low in fat while rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Particularly high in folate and vitamin C, they also supply important minerals, such as magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

Tips for buying and storing

When shopping for artichokes, look for ones that are heavy for their size. The best place to store artichokes is the vegetable crisper drawer in the fridge as it provides a cool and humid environment. They are best when eaten within a day or two of buying. Prepared artichokes can be stored in the fridge in a plastic bag or wrapped loosely in a damp paper towel for a few days.



Roasted Bell Pepper & Artichoke Dip

INGREDIENTS

- 9 mini bell peppers
- 1 (7 ounce) jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- ½ cup cream cheese (4 ounces)
- ½ cup sour cream
- Veggies, pretzels or chips for serving

PREPARATION

1. Position rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler to high. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil. Arrange mini peppers on the baking sheet and broil, flipping once, until the skins are blackened and blistered all over, about 8 minutes. Transfer the peppers to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let stand for 10 minutes. Remove and discard stems, skins and seeds.
2. Combine the peppers, artichokes, cream cheese and sour cream in a food processor; process until smooth. Serve with veggies, pretzels or chips, if desired.

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/7924142/roasted-bell-pepper-artichoke-dip/>