



How to Optimize Your Nutrition to Optimize Your Body and Mind

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Everyone has heard the expression, "*You are what you eat.*" This very simple saying means more and more each day as we gain a greater understanding about how foods affect us.

- ***The food you put into your body has an effect on your physical appearance, energy levels, bodily processes and how well your brain functions.***

Your brain is a system of chemical connections firing off at each other so fast that it's almost impossible to fathom. Well, the food you eat affects the chemical make up of your brain, altering how it acts and works.

Feelings and emotions also affect your brain. Obviously feelings are born in the brain, and, depending on the emotion, they can alter the brain chemistry. For example, some people with mental health issues do not produce certain chemicals in their brain, which radically changes their behavior patterns.

There are things you can do to regulate this chemical reaction on a daily basis, and it's simpler than you may think! Eating certain foods can specifically affect different functions of the body, the chemicals in your brain, and your emotions.

Here are some healthy foods you can eat to help optimize both your body and mind:

1. **Omega-3 Fatty Acids.** Eating foods high in Omega-3s has a great deal of health benefits, including ***improving your brain's development and functions.*** The Omega-3 fatty acid, DHA, is an important polyunsaturated fat found in the brain.

- Fish is a great source of Omega-3 Fatty acids, including DHA.
2. **Choline.** Choline is a chemical building block of every cell in your body. ***Choline has also been shown to help with retaining information in your memory.*** The more choline your lifetime diet includes, the less likely you'll be to face extreme memory loss as you grow older.
 3. **Antioxidants.** We all recognize the health benefits of antioxidants in fighting diseases, but did you know a cup of ***hot cocoa has a higher concentration of antioxidants*** in it than either red wine or green tea? It's true – as long as you use a dark chocolate.
 - Serve a cup of rich dark hot cocoa after dinner, and know you're actually taking good care of your health!
 4. **Green Tea.** Have a glass of green tea every day to help keep the cognitive functions of your brain in tiptop shape. Studies have shown 70% of people who drank green tea showed an ***improvement in the functions of the brain.***
 5. **Cranberry Juice.** This beverage is not only good for your body, specifically, kidney and urinary functions, but it can also help ***prevent a stroke.*** Cranberry juice has also been shown to help reduce brain cell damage after a stroke.

Eating a well balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, protein, and some fat is the best way to nourish both the body and mind. Our bodies are highly complicated machines requiring many different things to function properly, and what we eat determines how it functions.

By taking simple steps to optimize your nutrition, you'll also optimize your mind and body. Start making healthy, nutritious food choices today and enjoy looking, feeling, and thinking better.