

The Happiness Plan

Brain health is everything, and the foods you eat, as well as the lifestyle choices you make, determine its fate. Take advantage of the following strategies to unleash your brain's full potential so you can experience more brain power, greater happiness, and less stress!

Four Brain Health Basics to Know

1. Your brain has ENORMOUS energy and nutrient demands.
 - The average brain is 2% of body weight yet utilizes a whopping 20-30% of the body's total daily calories burned and uses 20-25% of all the glucose that enters the bloodstream.
2. Your brain requires robust blood flow.
 - The average brain utilizes 15% of the body's total blood output from the heart, thus you must have a healthy heart to have a healthy brain.
3. Your brain is highly susceptible to oxidative damage. This is due to the following unique brain features:
 - The brain is filled with fat and fatty tissues are more readily oxidized.
 - The brain is filled with large amounts of iron (from its robust blood flow) and iron can be a powerful pro-oxidant.
 - The brain processes massive amounts of oxygen (25% of all the oxygen you breathe) and oxidative stress/oxidation is a normal byproduct of oxygen metabolism.
4. Oxidation in the brain leads to inflammation in the brain, and inflammation is the brain's "Universal Destructor." In fact, we now know that inflammation is the culprit for most all forms of damage that

occur in the human body and is a fundamental driver of chronic diseases. Stress, depression, other forms of mental strife, as well as neurodegenerative diseases like dementia are clearly linked to excess inflammation in the body and brain.

The Four Primary Goals of the Happiness Diet

1. Optimal brain nourishment with emphasis on the following key brain nutrients:
 - Long-chain omega-3 fats—DHA/EPA
 - Wholesome, fiber and nutrient rich carbs – fruits, veggies, beans, and physically intact whole grains
 - Brain-healthy proteins
 - Magnesium, Zinc, Vitamin D, and the B vitamins - inadequate levels of these nutrients are not uncommon and can be detrimental or even devastating to brain health. Additionally, stress increases the bodily needs for these nutrients.
 - Powerful antioxidants, including vitamins C and E and most importantly the plant-based antioxidants, particularly the anthocyanins in blue/purple plant-based foods and the flavonoids in dark chocolate, tea, extra virgin olive oil, nuts, coffee, apples, and herbs and spices. Anthocyanins and flavonoids are members of the polyphenol family of plant antioxidants. Polyphenols have been shown to stimulate neurogenesis (formation of new brain cells) and protect the brain from oxidative damage.
2. A healthy cardiovascular system
 - A healthy and optimally functioning heart and arteries are fundamental for brain health.
3. Reducing oxidation in the brain and body

4. Reducing inflammation in the brain and body

The food choices we make have an enormous influence on the structure and function of our brains—thus on cognitive function, mood, stress, and how our bodies respond to stress.

Bottom line: You can choose foods that allow your brain to thrive and heal or choose those that lead to its damage and deterioration. Keep watching to learn how to do the former and avoid the latter!

Conquer Your Carbs

*Feeding your brain the right carbs while avoiding the wrong carbs is **essential** for brain health and peace of mind.*

- Restrict the “Great White Hazards”—white flour products, white rice, white potatoes, and sugars/sweets.
 - This notorious bunch of processed, “high-glycemic” carbs are a triple threat to your brain. They spike up your blood sugar and insulin levels which 1) incites oxidation and inflammation 2) drives weight gain (remember the fatter your body, the smaller your brain—this has aptly been dubbed “The Dinosaur Syndrome”) 3) predisposes to sudden drops in blood glucose that impair brain function while triggering hunger and even stress.
 - Additionally, these refined, white carbs have been largely stripped of their innate nutritional fire-power because of processing. Relative to the good carbs, they are nutritional weaklings and do little to provide the brain the nutrients and antioxidants it craves and demands.
 - Sugary foods and beverages are particularly brain toxic because they also spike your bloodstream with fructose. Fructose spikes

are even more pro-inflammatory than glucose spikes and lead to erratic brain cell firing. Sugary foods and beverages are clearly brain drains. ***The less sugar you eat the healthier and happier your brain will be - period!*** Also keep in mind there is growing evidence for the addictive nature of sugar and sweets, which originates at the level of the brain.

- And of course, sugary foods, especially sugary beverages, are uniquely fattening—so do not pour on the fat!
- Enjoy the brain-thriving, “starchy” carbs—whole grains and beans.
 - Strive to include 2-3 daily servings of 100% whole grains, preferably ***physically-intact*** whole kernel grains like oatmeal, brown rice, black rice, quinoa, farro, barley, etc. These low-to-moderate glycemic carbs (i.e. more slowly digested) are an excellent source of gradually released brain fuel (glucose) along with several other critical brain nutrients - magnesium, zinc, folate, and fiber. They also provide stellar antioxidant and anti-inflammatory power (some even higher than fruits and vegetables!).

As a final bonus, whole grains can ***healthfully*** boost the brains feel-good neurotransmitter, serotonin. But keep in mind that flour-based whole grain foods, like 100% whole wheat breads, can spike up your glucose and insulin on par with white bread. Therefore, it is ALWAYS best to eat ***unadulterated intact grains***. This is helpful for appetite control too.

- Beans are a sensational brain superfood. Strive to eat them daily. They are a low glycemic, (very slowly digested) nutrient-dense starch that offers the brain fantastic fuel (glucose) paired up with the incomparable brainy quintet of magnesium, zinc, folate, fiber, and antioxidants. In fact, beans provide more fiber and folate

than any other food group and their antioxidant power rivals berries. Do not squander the truly cerebral opportunity to eat more beans! And like whole grains, this wholesome starch can also raise serotonin levels.

- You can include beans in any variety and in any form--canned, fresh, frozen, or dry.

Fall Madly in Love with Fruits and Veggies

Eating an abundance of fruits and veggies offers one of the quickest and most effective means to transform your brain health, safeguard against the ravages of excess stress, and lift your mood.

- Like beans and whole grains, fruits and vegetables provide the nutrient and fiber rich “slow-release” carbs the brain loves for fuel.
- But what really launches them up to the realm of brain health superstardom are their potent and abundant antioxidant and anti-inflammatory phytochemicals.
 - The brain health superstar fruits include: all berries*, cherries, oranges, cantaloupes, kiwi, plums, red/purple grapes, apples, and pomegranates.
 - The brain health superstar veggies include: all forms of dark leafy greens*, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, red onions, cauliflower, red bell peppers, tomatoes, avocados, beets, purple cabbage and artichoke hearts.
 - Strive to eat some form of berries (frozen just fine) and some form of dark leafy greens (salad is easy) every day of your life. I do!

- For optimal happiness and stress control, strive for 7 or more total servings of fruits and veggies a day. Fruits and vegetables have been directly linked to less depression, more happiness, and superior intellectual function in many studies. They also safeguard in many ways against the ravages of excess stress.
- The blue/ reddish/purple colored fruits and veggies deserve special mention. They get their stunning colors from pigments called anthocyanins. Anthocyanins are considered the reigning antioxidant/anti-inflammatory champions in the plant kingdom. Their exquisitely powerful 1-2 punch is oh-so-valuable for guarding and protecting the brain because of its unique susceptibility to the ravages of inflammation and oxidation.
 - Make a point to include lots of them in your life. The richest food sources of anthocyanins include all purple, red, or blue colored berries, cherries (especially tart varieties), black currents, red/purple grapes, red wine (up to one glass a day), pomegranates, eggplant (with the skin), red cabbage, black and kidney beans, black rice, red onions, and blue/purple corn.
- Fruits and vegetables, along with whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, are also the foods that provide fiber. Fiber has a long list of esteemed health credentials but is particularly valuable to the brain for two key reasons:
 - Weight control - fiber is Mother Nature's secret weapon for fighting fat

- Establishing and maintaining an abundance of “good bacteria” in the gut.
- We now know the health of the GI-tract and the health of your brain are inextricably linked. We call this vital and intimate relationship the gut-brain axis. The healthier your gut—the healthier your brain.
 - Also note that your gut is considered your “second brain” – technically known as the enteric nervous system. It is filled with nervous tissue and produces three times more neurotransmitters than the brain!
 - For your GI-tract to function optimally and to be healthy, it must be inhabited by a rich array of “good bacteria”. Good bacteria, also known as probiotics, feed off fiber. The more fiber you eat the more “good bacteria” you will have in your gut and the less bad bacteria you will have. If your diet is low in fiber (the average American only gets a paltry 13-15 grams a day), the “bad bacteria” will take over in your gut, which can ultimately drive up inflammation throughout the body, compromise immunity, and impair brain health and function.
 - ***Bottom line—Lots of fiber in the diet = lots of good bacteria in the gut = a healthy gut = a healthier, happier, less-stressed brain.*** Think of fiber as mother-nature’s Prozac. Strive for a daily dose of 27-35 grams a day. The more the better!

In the most rigorous and updated review of published science to date, high intakes of fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains were associated with less depression risk. (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2014;99; 181-97)

Give Your Brain an Oil Change

The type of fat in your diet has an enormous impact on the structure, function, and health of your brain.

- ***Avoid the two brain-busting fats—trans-fats and saturated fats.***

- Trans fats are literally toxic to brain cells. Trans fats, also known as partially hydrogenated oils, are now officially banned from our food supply (thanks to new FDA regulations). Formerly, they were ubiquitous, especially in stick margarine and processed foods containing partially hydrogenated oils.

- Restrict saturated fats. When consumed in excess (which is typical for most Americans), these fats impair brain structure and function.

- Saturated fats hinder brain cell function and neuroplasticity (the ability to forge new brain cell connections), while impairing blood flow and predisposing to weight gain, especially in the belly. Remember the bigger your belly the smaller your brain! In fact, there are numerous studies linking excess body fat, especially in the belly to diminished brain volume and function. There is also evidence that saturated fats negatively impact our stress response system. To keep your saturated fats in check, limit red meat to two servings or less a week, use butter sparingly, choose low-fat or non-fat dairy products over their full-fat versions, and stay away from processed foods containing palm oil or palm kernel oil.

- ***Enjoy the healthy fats – monounsaturated fats and omega 3 fats. Your brain loves them!***

- Include the monounsaturated fats as the primary/staple fats in your diet.

- Monounsaturated fats benefit the structural integrity of nerve cell membranes.
- Monounsaturated fats also promote healthy blood flow to the brain and guard against insulin resistance (metabolic dysfunction). Metabolic dysfunction is highly detrimental to brain health.
- The foods that provide monounsaturated fats include: olive oil (extra virgin is best because of its high polyphenol content), canola oil, nuts, and avocados.
- Extra virgin olive oil, avocados, and nuts are also teeming with additional brain nutrients and potent antioxidant/anti-inflammatory plant compounds called polyphenols. I strive to eat each of these foods **every day**. Extra virgin olive oil has been specifically linked to less depression, less pain, and less cognitive decline and is the star ingredient in the Mediterranean pattern of eating. As diet styles go, the Mediterranean pattern of eating has the strongest scientific evidence for optimal brain health and mood.
- Be sure to consume optimal amounts of omega 3 fats. These precious and essential fats, specifically DHA and EPA, make up much of the solid structure of your brain. They are intimately involved in **both** healthy brain structure **AND** function. Most westernized diets are pathetically deficient in this vital fat.
- The foods that provide these fats include: seafood, particularly oily fish, walnuts, canola oil, flax/chia/hemp seeds, omega-3 eggs, dark leafy greens, whole soy foods, and wheat germ.

- Oily fish - salmon, tuna, black cod, lake trout, anchovies, mackerel, herring, and sardines are **by far** the richest and most bio-available sources of these hard-to-find fats.
- Strive to eat at least 3 servings of oily fish a week. If you do not do this, it is unlikely that you will be getting optimal amounts of DHA and EPA for brain health. High quality fish oil supplements are an alternative, but likely NOT as effective as eating the real fish. Personally, I strive for 5 servings of oily fish a week and succeed by eating lots of canned wild salmon (sockeye tastes best), along with fresh and frozen wild salmon. I consider wild salmon the healthiest protein on the planet. (It is also a sustainable source of fish.)
- The other food sources of omega 3 fats are healthy foods and can make a meaningful contribution to the brain's omega 3 needs but cannot compete with oily fish as the very best source of omega 3 fats for brain health.
- As a bonus, fish are also an outstanding source of five other key brain nutrients: magnesium, B-vitamins, zinc, vitamin D (oily fish only), and choline.
- In addition to brain structure and function, omega-3 fats guard and improve cardiovascular health (better brain blood flow) and lower inflammation in the body. In fact, omega-3 fats are the body's most powerful innate anti-inflammatory agents. So, this one type of fat is simultaneously helping us reach ALL 4 of our primary goals!!

Dig Your Vitamin D

The brain is loaded with Vitamin D receptors and we now know that vitamin D plays a critical role in brain health and function. Optimal vitamin D is also essential for mitigating the ravages of excessive stress.

- Unfortunately, low levels of Vitamin D are rampant—in some studies up to 70-75% of the population.
- Vitamin D has 3 big roles in the brain.
 - 1) Mood regulation
 - 2) Controlling inflammation
 - 3) Neurogenesis (making new brain cells). It is also essential for the production of the feel-good neurotransmitter serotonin.
- Low levels of Vitamin D have been consistently linked to depression, cognitive decline, pain, fatigue, and neurodegenerative diseases like Multiple-sclerosis and Parkinson's....
- Optimize your Vitamin D level by:
 - Safe, prudent sun exposure
 - Making a proactive effort to regularly eat the few foods that provide Vitamin D: oily fish like salmon, egg yolks, some mushrooms, and fortified dairy products.
 - As a safety net, take 2,000 IU's daily of a D3 supplement or as directed by your healthcare provider based on ***your blood level. (Always check with your healthcare provider before taking any supplements).***

- Get your blood level of vitamin D checked periodically (a 25-hydroxy D test) and note that it will be at its yearly low at the beginning of March.

Spice Up Your Life

*Spices (and herbs) contain **medicinal levels** of anti-inflammatory and antioxidant plant compounds. Plus, they kick up the flavor of your foods for zero calories.*

- All herbs and spices are great for you, but the anti-inflammatory brain health darlings are: rosemary, ginger, turmeric, curry, cinnamon, and garlic. I urge you to use this brainy bunch regularly and liberally in your diet.
 - Except for garlic, dried/powdered forms of herbs and spices are fantastic. I do not know of any other 2 second activity (shake, shake) that could provide healthier returns for the effort.
 - Garlic is best fresh. To maximize its potency, chop or mince it and let it sit for 5 minutes before adding it to your foods and salad dressings.

Power Up with Smart Proteins

*The brain requires a **constant supply** of amino acids, which are provided by protein foods. Your brain uses amino acids in the production of its neurotransmitters. Protein foods also facilitate the steady blood glucose level the brain prefers. If you make smart protein choices, your brain can also reap the rewards of several other crucially important brain nutrients.*

- Your best protein choices and their highlight features include:

- **Seafood**, especially the oily fish like salmon - omega-3 fats, selenium, zinc, magnesium, Vitamin D (oily fish only), B vitamins, and choline.
 - **Lean poultry** - B vitamins, selenium, zinc.
 - **Beans** - fiber, folate, zinc, magnesium, antioxidant/anti-inflammatory compounds
 - **Nuts/seeds** - healthy fats, zinc, magnesium, fiber, vitamin E, antioxidant/anti-inflammatory compounds
 - **Omega-3 eggs** - B Vitamins, choline, omega-3 fats, vitamin E
 - **Low-fat dairy products**, particularly low- fat or non-fat plain yogurt and kefir - good bacteria/probiotics (yogurt and kefir only), magnesium, calcium, zinc, vitamin D (some, but not all).
 - **Wild game** - Omega-3 fats, B vitamins, Zinc.
 - **Whole soy foods** (soy milk, tofu, tempeh, roasted soy nuts, miso) - Omega-3 fats, B vitamins, Vitamin E, magnesium, selenium, fiber, antioxidant/anti-inflammatory compounds
- In addition to providing amino acids, proteins also provide a steady blood glucose response. Remember—the brain is exquisitely sensitive to fluctuating levels of glucose—it hates it high and it hates it low.
 - Protein-rich foods also enhance focus and concentration by boosting dopamine levels. Dopamine is the brain's focus and motivation neurotransmitter.

- The not-so-smart protein choices include red meat, especially fatty and processed varieties of conventional red meat, and full-fat dairy products.
 - Red meat is a rich source of the following bad-for-the-brain compounds—excessive heme iron, saturated fats, excess omega-6 fats, carnitine, advanced glycation end products, and excessive levels of potentially harmful environmental agents and antibiotics.
 - If you include red meat in your diet, choose lean cuts of unprocessed red meat and limit to 2 servings or less a week. Grass-fed beef is the best option.
 - Meats prepared via grilling, broiling, or frying will also contain brain-damaging AGE's and oxidized fats. AGE's (also called advanced glycation end products) are toxic compounds that form when meat and starches are cooked, especially in high, dry heat (think bacon, burgers, and fries). AGE's can accumulate in the body and we know they incite damaging oxidation and inflammation.

In animal studies, they are clearly linked to loss of cognitive function and dementia. When preparing any animal-based proteins, stewing, poaching, or marinating before cooking will dramatically reduce the formation of AGE's and oxidized fats during the cooking process.

Steer Clear of Processed Industrial Foods, Particularly Fast Foods

Fast food houses virtually every imaginable food feature that can damage and disrupt brain function and reduce your body's ability to deal with stress. Likewise, many processed foods share the same undesirable features.

- I do not know of any quicker dietary means to trash your brain health and boost your stress level than to eat traditional fast foods.

- The reasons are myriad.
 - Fast-food provides all the bad carbs, all the bad fats, insane amounts of sodium (bad for blood flow and driving inflammation), essentially no fiber, loads of pro-inflammatory AGE's, and hardly any nutrients (the key brain nutrients - omega 3 fats, vitamin D, magnesium, fiber, and zinc are notably rare in fast foods).
 - Fast food has been directly linked to depression and increased stress.
 - One study reported a 51% increased risk of depression in those consuming the most fast-food relative to those consuming the least.
 - Fast-food has also been directly linked to weight gain and metabolic dysfunction—both of which harm the brain.
- My best advice is to never set foot or drive into any traditional fast food establishments. And for goodness sake do not take your precious children with their rapidly developing brains into these places!
- It is also very wise to limit processed foods as they are typically home to the same brain-averse ingredients as fast foods. Whole, real foods graciously provided by Mother Nature are largely free of brain-disrupting ingredients while generally abundant in brain-happy nutrients and compounds. So, **GET REAL!**

Tea it Up

Freshly brewed tea, particularly white or green, is turbo-charged with antioxidant power thanks to its robust supply of flavonoids.

- Regularly drinking freshly brewed tea has been linked to lower levels of dementia and depression, and greater stress resiliency.
- In addition to its remarkably powerful antioxidants, tea also provides a gentle kick of caffeine which boosts mood and enhances focus.
- Tea's L-theanine is a natural calming compound.
- Drinking freshly brewed tea is also linked to superior cardiovascular health.
- I do not know of a more relaxing and easy way to mainline antioxidants than drinking freshly brewed tea.
- To optimize the goodness in tea—drink it freshly brewed (loose leaf or bagged) and hot or warm. Adding ice can decrease the absorption of tea's antioxidants. Steep it for at least 3-5 minutes and add a twist of lemon or lime. The Vitamin C in the citrus can greatly enhance the bio-availability of the tea's antioxidant polyphenols.
- Forget bottled, processed, or powdered teas. Studies show they have minimal to no antioxidants and many have added sugar.

Get Your Java Joy

Coffee, like tea, is dripping with a commanding brigade of brain-friendly plant antioxidants. In fact, a typical serving of filtered coffee ranks 3rd in foods with the most polyphenols. Additionally, its caffeine has well-documented cognitive benefits including enhancing focus, concentration and memory, while lifting mood.

- Coffee, with few exceptions, is a remarkably safe beverage. Additionally, it can now boast a growing list of potential health benefits including several directly related to the brain. Regular coffee consumption has been linked to less dementia and Alzheimer's, less depression, less Parkinson's disease, and a lower risk of suicide. Scientists speculate that both its caffeine and rich-array of plant-based antioxidants account for these observations.
- Include up to 2-3 cups in the morning hours or as tolerated.
- It is best to avoid all forms of caffeine after 1 pm as it can interfere with sleep (which is **critical** for brain health and stress relief). Despite what you may perceive—studies show that caffeine after mid-day has measurable negative effects on restful nighttime sleep.

- People who are sensitive to the stimulating properties of caffeine (they know who they are) or women who are pregnant or may be pregnant should avoid caffeine, particularly in the first trimester.

Come Over to the Dark Side

It may sound too good to be true, but dark chocolate really is a treat you can indulge in and feel good about 😊. Thanks to its exceedingly high levels of plant chemicals called flavanols, dark chocolate has ridiculous antioxidant power and a rapidly growing list of potential health benefits.

- Dark chocolate has been shown to significantly boost blood flow while improving the health of arteries and lowering blood pressure. Remember the brain loves vigorous blood flow!
- Dark chocolate has also been shown to boost mood and enhance focus. In fact, it is the only food that has been shown to acutely boost mood and cognitive function.
- In addition to its dazzling antioxidants, dark chocolate also provides a very respectable dose of magnesium, zinc, fiber, and caffeine-like plant-based stimulants that the brain loves. And if you eat it as directed, it will barely make a dent in your daily sugar quota.
- Make dark chocolate your dessert or treat of choice. For best results, include up to 1 ounce of 70% or higher cacao dark chocolate. The higher the cacao, the more antioxidants, and generally the less sugar it will have. Up to 2 squares from the standard, large, dark chocolate bar is a prudent daily dose. I always have 1-2 squares of Ghirardelli's 86% cacao dark chocolate after my lunch. 😊😊😊 As a final bonus, dark chocolate can help tame your taste buds hankering for sweets. If you include it regularly, you will likely find that standard sweets begin to taste too sweet and less sweet foods like fresh fruits begin to taste decadently sweet!

Make Sure You Move!

1. *Regular physical activity is the closest thing to the “magic bullet” for guarding the health and vitality of both your brain and your body.*

- Benefits almost too numerous to count.
 - However, you must understand that we now know that the human body and brain require a certain threshold amount of physical activity daily to avoid chronic disease and remain in good working order.
In other words, if you don't do it, you are guaranteed to lose your health. It is as simple as that.
 - Strive for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity (ex: brisk walking) 5 days a week or 45 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity 3 days a week. As the optimum – moderate aerobic activity 5 hours a week or vigorous aerobic activity 2.5 hours a week. Resistance activity (muscle strengthening) at least 2 days a week, especially for those over the age of 50.
 - Check with your healthcare provider before exercising if you have any cardiovascular risk factors or chronic medical problems.
2. ***Avoid prolonged sitting.*** Regardless of your weight, your health status, or your physical activity level, sitting for extended periods of time significantly boosts your risk of cardio-metabolic diseases and death.
- Please understand that regular exercise is not enough to maintain optimal health – you must avoid prolonged sitting too.

Ideally, strive to get up and move around at least 2-3 minutes for every hour that you must be seated. Studies show that the cardio-metabolic benefits of movement kick in within 30 seconds. Light activity, like walking to the restroom, helps significantly. Simply standing up is also beneficial. As the ideal, strive to limit the total amount you sit in one day to four hours or less. The most important time to avoid prolonged sitting is immediately after meals.

Get Your Beauty Rest

Getting optimal sleep is fundamental to all aspects of health. The science is convincing that poor sleep increases the risk of a host of chronic diseases and mental health issues to include heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression and dementia. Studies also confirm that 7-8 hours of restful sleep each night is optimal. Both more and less than 7-8 hours has been linked to a greater risk of brain dysfunction and mental health issues. Thankfully, we know more than ever regarding what it takes to get restful sleep.

- Strive for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
- Make the room you sleep in as dark, cool, and quiet as possible. Also, keep it free of any electronics that can emit light or noise like a TV, tablet, phone, or computer.
- Avoid vigorous exercise or eating within two hours before bed, as these can stimulate you and prevent restful sleep.
- Try a soothing chamomile tea, meditating, or another relaxing practice that works for you to get your head and body ready for bed. Sex has been shown to encourage more restful sleep.
- Strive to maintain the same sleep and awaken times day to day. According to the sleep experts, this practice is likely the most beneficial of all strategies to improve the quality of your sleep.
- Avoid close exposure to the backlighting from a computer, tablet, or smart phone in the hour or two before bed. One recent study noted a significant decrease in the release of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin after exposure to this artificial light.
- Get regular daily exercise. I am convinced that restful sleep is virtually impossible without a certain threshold level of daily physical activity (at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity like brisk walking).
- Minimize the use of prescription sleep aids. They do not allow for restful, “normal” sleep and can predispose one to dependence.

- Minimize use of alcohol. It is well established that alcohol interferes with quality sleep, particularly REM sleep. Ideally, limit alcohol to one or less drinks a night, and avoid any alcohol within three hours of going to bed.
- Avoid use of products (ideally after 2PM) containing caffeine or other stimulants, for example, coffees, teas, sodas, energy drinks, etc.
- Spend some time outdoors each day to get exposed to natural light. This is helpful in maintaining normal diurnal rhythms, which are fundamental to health and restful sleep. Morning light (before 10 AM) appears to be particularly beneficial in this regard and has less skin-damaging UV rays.

Continued...

THE HAPPINESS DIET

Brain Health Superstars - *The starred selections are the very best of the superstars

- Dark lettuce greens (spinach, romaine, etc.)*
- Dark leafy greens (kale, collards, etc.) *
- Red onions*
- Tomatoes
- Garlic*
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Beets*
- Red/orange/yellow bell peppers
- All berries – especially blueberries (daily) *
- Apples*
- Oranges
- Red/purple grapes*
- Pomegranates*
- Avocado
- Garlic*
- Ginger (fresh or dried) *
- Turmeric*
- Cinnamon*
- Curry*
- Rosemary*
- Plums*
- Cherries*
- Organic plain soy milk
- Low-fat or non-fat plain yogurt*
- Edamame
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Oily fish*(Wild Alaskan salmon is my top pick)
- 100% Whole grain cereals
- Whole oats (steel cut or “old-fashioned” best)
- Quinoa
- Wheat germ
- Oat bran
- Black Rice*
- Brown rice/Wild Rice
- Beans/legumes*
- Roasted red peppers
- Any form of tomato product
- Canned pumpkin
- Canned Salmon*
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil*
- Clean water
- Freshly brewed unsweetened tea (green or white best)*
- Prepared hummus
- Bean dips
- Salsa
- Tabbouleh
- Guacamole
- Pesto
- Sun-dried tomatoes
- Dark chocolate (70% cacao or higher) *
- Any nuts, walnuts tops*
- Any seeds, especially flax, chia, and hemp
- Omega 3 eggs
- Coffee (as tolerated/avoid in pregnancy)
- Fermented foods* (kefir, yogurt, kimchi, kraut, kombucha, tempeh, etc.

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