

Best snacks for brain health

Did you know that of all the organs in your body, it's your brain that uses the most energy? That's why it's important to feed your brain steady and nutritious fuel throughout the day. That way, you can think clearly, skip the 3pm 'brain-fog' and get through the day without reaching in desperation for the biscuit barrel.

As Jean Hailes naturopath Sandra Villella explains, there are healthy ways to snack and unhealthy ways to snack. "The best snacks for brain health keep your energy stable throughout the day, rather than on a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs," says Sandra. "They need to be low in sugar and rich in protein, which helps to steady your blood sugar levels, and healthy fats.

"Healthy fats, in particular the omega-3 fat called DHA, actually make up part of our brain and are vital for brain development and function. This is why foods that are high in DHA, such as oily fishes like salmon, sardines and tuna, are often referred to as 'brain food'."

Sandra also advises that if you are watching your weight, always choose high-protein snacks and avoid mindless snacking. "Try to be present and take a break with your snack, rather than carrying on tasks while mindlessly shovelling lollies into your mouth!"

Here are some of Sandra's favourite healthy snacks and the reasons why they benefit your body and brain.

Handful of nuts – No preparation needed, just grab a handful (make sure it's just a handful) and go! Unroasted, unsalted nuts are the healthiest choice and walnuts in particular are a favourite of the [Mediterranean diet](#), which is renowned for being a brain-healthy diet.

Sliced apple with nut spread – For some people, eating a piece of fruit by itself doesn't give them enough full-factor. The addition of a nut spread such as ABC spread – almond, brazil and cashew spread, available in most supermarkets – helps to increase the protein content of this snack, keeping you fuller for longer.

Half an avocado with a squeeze of lemon – So simple, yet so satisfying. One of the basic roles of fats is to create a feeling of satisfaction and fullness, and avocados are a great source of healthy fats.

Hard-boiled egg – Packed full of protein, a hard-boiled egg helps to keep your blood sugar steady. They are so quick to prepare and you can boil a few extra to keep handy in the fridge.

Tinned tuna on wholegrain crackers – A quick and easy example of 'brain food', tuna is a good source of protein and DHA, one of the healthy omega-3 fats.

Sardines on wholemeal toast – Another quick and easy 'brain food' snack to see you through until dinner time.

Homemade trail mix – Some of Sandra's favourite trail mix ingredients includes walnuts, almonds, coconut flakes, cranberries and sunflower seeds. [Here's a recipe.](#)

Yoghurt and blueberries – Blueberries are a rich source of antioxidants to protect the brain, and yoghurt is a great source of calcium and protein.

Stuffed prunes – This dish was popular back in the '70s; however, Sandra is hoping for a comeback because prunes pack a punch for brain health!

“Prunes are dried plums, and for this snack you stuff each one with cream cheese and top it with an almond,” she says. “The prunes are the secret weapon in this snack, as plums are a rich source of antioxidants to protect the brain. Research has also shown that eating plums is associated with improved brain function and thinking”.

For another delicious wholesome snack idea that satisfies your sweet tooth, try Sandra's latest recipe, cranberry, oat and granola cookies.

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