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Nutritious Bites
Food for Thought
By Mary Grider, Nutrition Educator

Your brain is “command central” for your entire body. You might say that your brain health is key to your overall health. Science has researched foods that can help your brain focus by producing hormones that increase alertness, as well as attention span. The following foods are considered brain superfoods:

- **Salmon** - contains omega-3 fatty acids, which may help reduce brain fog
- **Walnuts** - these and other nuts contain minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants that may decrease your risk for Alzheimer’s disease
- **Broccoli** - is high in choline and vitamin K, which can help memory function and focus
- **Blueberries** - can protect the brain from toxins and degeneration
- **Oranges** - tare full of vitamin C and antioxidants to protect against age-related mental decline
- **Green leafy vegetables** - are packed with antioxidants

In general, those who follow a diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, and lower in processed foods, sodium, and sugary drinks will be eating well for a healthy body and brain.
Recipe of the Month
Blueberry Banana Pancakes (Serves 4)
Ripe bananas take the place of sugar in these quick pancakes, and quick-cook oats provide a boost of fiber!

**Ingredients**
- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup quick-cook oats
- ½ cup fresh blueberries

**Directions**
1. Mash bananas in a large bowl until smooth. Mix in eggs and vanilla until well combined, then mix in oats. Fold in blueberries carefully.
2. Heat a skillet on medium heat and add in a scoop of the pancake batter. Smooth out to form an even layer. Cook for about 2-3 minutes until you start to see bubbles releasing from the top of the batter. Flip and cook until the other side is golden brown, about 1-2 minutes.
3. Garnish your pancake with your favorite toppings (such as Greek yogurt, granola, fresh blueberries, or maple syrup). Enjoy!

Recipe and photo courtesy of Tasty.co (https://tasty.co/recipe/healthy-blueberry-pancakes)

Keep on Moving
Walk On!

When you think of “exercise,” purchasing equipment, buying special clothes, or signing up for classes may come to mind. Exercise doesn’t have to be complicated.

One of the easiest and least expensive forms of exercise is to walk. The only equipment that you need is a pair of supportive shoes, which you may already have in your closet.

Finding a walking partner can help motivate you and keep you accountable to a routine. Whether you walk indoors or out in nature, find a place that has a sturdy, relatively flat surface and be careful if you’re on a nature hike to avoid uneven or rocky ground.

To up your intensity, you can always carry light weights to increase your level of exertion. Walking helps you stay healthy one step at a time!

*Where is your favorite place to walk this time of year?*

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**Monthly Chair Exercise**
**Hamstring Stretch**

After walking or other exercise, it’s important to stretch your muscles to prevent cramping and increase flexibility. This hamstring stretch is very useful, as our hamstrings tend to get very tight when we sit for long periods of time.

Seated in a chair with good posture, bring one knee up toward your chest and hold on to the back of the leg just above the knee to support the weight of your leg. Slowly rotate the ankle clockwise for about 10 seconds, then reverse and rotate counterclockwise. Lower the leg back down and do the same with the opposite leg. Do another set. Stretching the hamstrings help to prevent them from tugging on the lower back, which can help to prevent lower back pain.

For more exercises, visit the following link: https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/livewellagewell-archive/Exercise+Resources/13-ChairExercisesBallsBands(1).pdf

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Living Better
Brain Health

Our brains are often overlooked when we consider healthy aging. But a healthy brain is essential for living your best life into your golden years. We have discussed the important part our food plays in keeping a healthy brain, but some other factors also play important roles.

1. **Social interactions** are key for brain health. People who are social tend to have a lower risk of cognitive decline, and being social can buffer the effects of cortisol (a hormone produced by stress).

2. **Exercise.** Whether it’s moderate intensity or even tai chi or yoga, exercise can increase blood flow to the brain, increase its supply of oxygen, and reduce inflammation.

3. **Don’t do more than one task at a time.** Multitasking is not helpful for your brain – even though many of us think we are “good multi-takers.” It overloads your brain and can make you less efficient.

4. **Learn new things.** Playing games and reading are good but may not be enough to really challenge our brains. Consider learning a new language, an instrument, or computer skills.

5. **Sleep** is important. Getting good deep sleep helps “clear out your brain,” so to speak. Studies have linked chronic sleep problems to a higher risk of dementia. Contact your physician if you have trouble sleeping or if you snore heavily. You may need a sleep study to determine why you’re not sleeping well.

Medication Manager
Be Prepared

Storms and other severe weather conditions are a common threat this time of year. And no home is exempt from the possibility of storm damage or even a fire. So, it is important to know how to be prepared for unexpected circumstances or emergencies.

General preparedness includes having an evacuation plan if you need to leave your home or knowing where the safest place is in your home if you need to shelter in place. You will also need to have a designated contact person or a place where you plan to go. Keeping important documents in a safe or fire proof storage container will also help you.

Below is a list of items you may want to keep in a small bag, perhaps with wheels, to help you if you need to leave your home or shelter in place without normal conveniences:

1. Flashlight with batteries
2. Shelf stable snack foods or canned goods with pop top lids and a spoon
3. Bottled water (at least 3 gallons per person and pet that will last for 3 days)
4. Cell phone and charger
5. Cash
6. Medications you need to take daily
7. First aid kit
8. Emergency contact information
9. Lighter
10. Light blanket

The most important thing about being prepared is to have a plan and know how to carry it out so you can be safe in an emergency.
To Your Health
Food Resources in Your Community

Most older adults are on a fixed income, such as social security or pension distributions. Sometimes, it may be difficult to have enough money to afford healthy foods. There are resources in your community that may help you stretch your food dollar so that you can buy more healthy foods.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
This program, previously known as the Food Stamp program, provides funds on a debit card each month to people with low income so that they can buy foods at participating retailers. If everyone in your household is over age 60, and you only have income from social security, disability, or retirement plans (meaning, you do not work), you may be able to apply for SNAP benefits using the shorter Senior SNAP application. If you have regular medical expenses over $35.01 per month, you may also be able to claim the Standard Medical Expense Deduction (SMED), which will decrease your reported monthly income and may increase the amount of SNAP benefits you receive. Medical expenses include Medicare Part B, Medicare Advantage, or Medicare Part D prescription drug premiums, mileage to/from doctors and pharmacies if you drive, and over-the-counter medications and supplies that your doctor prescribes. Ask your senior center director for more information.

Wholesome Wave
If you already receive SNAP benefits, you may be able to purchase double-produce at certain farmers’ markets with a Wholesome Wave Georgia Fresh For Less partnership. Visit https://www.wholesomewavegeorgia.org/georgia-fresh-for-less#gf4l-map to learn more.

SNAP-Ed
If you receive SNAP benefits or other public assistance, or you’re eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you may be able to participate in a SNAP-Ed workshop (in-person or online). This program, known as Food Talk, Food eTalk (online), or Food Talk: Better U (with a focus on small changes over time for better health), helps you develop skills to buy and prepare foods on a budget. Contact your local Extension Office to learn more (for a list of counties, visit https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices.html). You can also subscribe to the Food Talk newsletter at https://www.foodtalk.org.

A Matter of Balance Workshops
More workshops coming Fall 2019!

Living Well Workshops
More workshops coming Fall 2019!

If you’d like to host a workshop, please contact Whitney Bignell (web1975@uga.edu)

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