

Brain-Enhancing Nutrition Tips
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The term diet triggers fear and loathing in most people because it implies deprivation.¹ My work in progress, *Thought for Food: the Neuroscience of Nutrition for Optimal Brain Health*,² discusses neuroscience research on Mild Cognitive Impairment, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease, and the relationship of nutrition to brain health. It examines the impact of inflammation, oxidative stress, and glycation. It addresses popular diets such as Paleo, Mediterranean, Vegetarian, and Vegan. It aims to inspire nutritional choices that fuel the law professor's most valuable tool, her brain. This is an excerpt from the recommendations section of the article.

Improved Nutrition Enhances the Brain

Almost nothing is more personal than the decision law students, law professors, and lawyers make about what to eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine, as well as Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, based good health on proper food intake.³ Medicine moved away from nutrition-based recommendations with the scientific discoveries of the Industrial Revolution.⁴ In the mid-1980s, medical schools reintroduced nutrition into their curricula and about two-thirds of American medical schools currently incorporate nutrition courses.⁵

As a lawyer ages, her physical and mental health tend to deteriorate.⁶ Research also shows that the most powerful prescription for improving our health, aging well, and reducing the risk of illness is a healthful diet.⁷ In *The China Study*, Dr. T. Colin Campbell conducted the most comprehensive study of lifestyle, health, and nutrition and presented the story of how food choices can change our lives.⁸ The *China Study* resulted in two powerful findings: people who consumed the most animal-based food experienced the most chronic disease and people who consumed the most plant-based food avoided chronic disease and were the healthiest.⁹ Another finding was that major diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, can be reversed by a change in eating habits.¹⁰ Overall health can be improved with a change in the way a lawyer eats.¹¹

¹ TASNEEM BHATIA, *WHAT DOCTORS EAT* 7 (2013); MELVIN H. WILLIAMS, *NUTRITION FOR HEALTH, FITNESS, & SPORT* 304 (2007).

² Hat Tip to Stephen Colbert who entertained us for many years on Comedy Central with his segment *Food for Thought*, such as this episode: <http://www.cc.com/video-clips/t85slm/the-colbert-report-thought-for-food---usda-meatless-mondays---plant-communication-research>.

³ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 7.

⁴ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 8 (Medical advances include pasteurization, vaccinations, antibiotics, anesthesia, and surgical techniques.)

⁵ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 8-9.

⁶ VALENTINA A. ANDREEVA & EMMANUELLE KESSE-GUYOT, *Nutrition and Cognition in the Context of Ageing*, in *NUTRITION FOR BRAIN HEALTH AND COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE* 12-13 (2015).

⁷ T. COLIN CAMPBELL & THOMAS M. CAMPBELL II, *THE CHINA STUDY* 3 (2004).

⁸ CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL, *supra* note ___, at 12.

⁹ CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL, *supra* note ___, at 7.

¹⁰ CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL, *supra* note ___, at 7.

¹¹ T. COLIN CAMPBELL, *WHOLE: RETHINKING THE SCIENCE OF NUTRITION* 7 (2014).

Research shows that the structure and function of the brain can also be changed with modifications in nutrition practices, and diseases of the brain, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, can be improved or prevented with the adoption of a largely plant-based diet.¹² A longitudinal study of 272 Californians showed that those participants who skipped meat (vegans and vegetarians) were one-third as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as the carnivores.¹³

Never too Late to Start

The most famous American pediatrician, Dr. Benjamin Spock, was very athletic as a young man, winning a gold medal on the Yale rowing crew at the 1924 Olympics.¹⁴ In his eighties, he experienced numerous health problems: recurrent pneumonia, fluid around his heart and lungs due to exposure to tuberculosis, and chronic neuropathy that made it difficult to walk.¹⁵ His doctors told him that nothing could be done but to use a wheel chair and install an elevator in his home and wait for the end.¹⁶ Upon getting the quote for the pricey elevator, Dr. Spock decided to try major dietary changes.¹⁷ He eliminated meat and cheese, and moved to a diet rich in vegetables and whole grains.¹⁸ His sleep improved within days, his strength and energy returned within three weeks, and he lost 50 pound of fluid within six weeks.¹⁹ Dr. Spock became an advocate of plant-based diets and lived until he was nearly 95 years old.²⁰ Just as Dr. Dean Ornish demonstrated in 1990 that it was possible to reverse heart disease,²¹ it is also possible to reverse harm to the lawyer brain.²²

Foods that Heal: Three Simple Recommendations and Four Eating Tips

Below are three recommendations and four eating tips taken from the Recommendations section of my forthcoming article.

The first recommendation is to eat a big salad every day.²³ Include dark leafy greens because the greatest nutrition value is contained in the darkest greens.²⁴ Consume a pound of produce a day, the more colorful the better, to ingest powerful antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.²⁵ Dressing your salad with vinegar and a little olive oil can reduce the rise of blood glucose.²⁶ Your olive oil should be cold-pressed extra-virgin, come in a dark bottle, and be consumed

¹² TALITHA BEST AND LOUISE DYE, Good News Story: Nutrition for Brain Health, *in* NUTRITION FOR BRAIN HEALTH AND COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE 3 (2015).

¹³ NEAL D. BARNARD, POWER FOODS FOR THE BRAIN 49 (2013).

¹⁴ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 82.

¹⁵ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 82-83.

¹⁶ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 83.

¹⁷ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 83.

¹⁸ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 83.

¹⁹ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 83.

²⁰ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 84.

²¹ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 154-155.

²² BEST AND DYE *supra* note ___, at 3.

²³ JOEL FUHRMAN, EAT TO LIVE 212-213 (2011).

²⁴ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 41; BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 163.

²⁵ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 67, 273.

²⁶ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 24.

within a few months of purchase because light, air, and time reduce the nutrition benefits.²⁷ Adding an avocado to your salad helps your body absorb more of the antioxidants in the other salad ingredients.²⁸

The second recommendation is to limit what you drink to coffee, tea, and water.²⁹ Coffee is comparable to fruit as a source of polyphenol antioxidants.³⁰ Tea contains antioxidant polyphenols called catechins which can improve metabolism, reduce cancer risk, boost the immune system, and slow age-related bone loss.³¹ Antioxidants help control inflammation and protect brain cells from damage, reducing oxidative stress that can impair cognitive function.³²

The third recommendation is to snack on about a ¼ cup of a variety of nuts because they all contain antioxidants, but they have different beneficial micronutrients.³³ Use nuts and seeds as an ingredient, sprinkling them on salad or yogurt, or adding them to sauces or smoothies.³⁴

In addition to these recommendations, below are four eating tips to support optimal brain and body health.

1. Eat smaller meals and snacks frequently to maintain blood sugar levels.³⁵
2. Partake of breakfast every day to avoid overeating later and to prevent your body from storing more fat. Failing to eat between dinner and lunch the next day throws your metabolism into starvation mode.³⁶
3. If you eat meat, limit your intake to a healthy portion which is the size of your fist.³⁷ Reduce meat and increase fish intake to improve your omega-6/omega-3 balance.³⁸
4. Plan on getting vitamins and nutrients primarily from whole foods.³⁹ The supplements doctors most commonly take themselves, and recommend to patients, are: vitamin D; vitamin B₁₂; fish oil or fish and flax oil combined or EPA/DHA (for omega-3 fatty acids); and probiotics.⁴⁰

²⁷ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 48.

²⁸ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 33.

²⁹ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 37-38, 53-54.

³⁰ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 38.

³¹ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 53-54.

³² BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 19; ELLIE WHITNEY AND SHARON RADY ROLFES, UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION, 14TH ED. 376 (2015).

³³ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 45-16.

³⁴ BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 70; BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 163.

³⁵ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 60-61, 227, 230, 264, 330.

³⁶ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 65, 144, 299, 301, 313, 327.

³⁷ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 136.

³⁸ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 67-68.

³⁹ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 281, BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 68-70, 73-76.

⁴⁰ BHATIA, *supra* note ___, at 202-203; BARNARD, *supra* note ___, at 75.