

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

April 2012

Courtesy of Asset Health



BRAIN TEASERS

There are several factors that affect the way your brain functions, such as stress, lack of sleep and aging. Several years ago, University of Michigan researchers found that cognitive ability starts to decline slightly as early as your twenties, when the brain begins to shrink and show other signs of aging. One in eight people among those 65 and older in the U.S. have Alzheimer's, and almost half the population 85 and older is afflicted, so it makes sense to do everything possible to strengthen your brain and protect it from future deterioration.

There are several things you can do to strengthen your brain such as: brushing and flossing your teeth with the opposite hand, wearing your watch upside down, doing the crossword or Sudoku in your newspaper, or even reading the paper by turning it upside down! Yes, it's harder but that's exactly the point. When you do familiar things in an unfamiliar way, you stimulate your brain, which results in your body sending more blood to your head, bathing the cells in health-giving oxygen and prompting the growth of new neurons.

Here are a few suggestions on how to boost your brain power:

Wake Up Well Rested - Aim to get at least six to eight hours of sleep each night.

Awaken Your Senses - Open a window and take in the sounds, sights, and smells of the world around you. We tend to tune out our surroundings and do many of our daily tasks on autopilot. However, when we wake up and smell the coffee, we're actively using the sensory parts of our brains, which means blood is flowing to those areas, keeping them robust.

Have a Cup of Coffee or Caffeinated Tea - Caffeine blocks adenosine, the brain chemical that is believed to cause memory loss and attention problems associated with sleep deprivation, which is what makes caffeine so effective after a late night.

Nip Stress Now - When you feel tension building, take a three-minute meditation break to calm down and enhance your focus.

Chat with a Co-worker Over Lunch - Having a weak social network and limited interactions with friends, family, and colleagues has been shown to increase the risks of dementia by as much as 60 percent.

Antioxidants

Blueberries	Apples
Pomegranates	Grapes
Cherries	Garlic
Red Cabbage	Spinach
Red Wine	Kale
Berries	Dark Chocolate

Magnesium-Rich

Munchies

Broccoli
Almonds
Cashews

Brain Food

Protein

Eggs
Beans
Dairy
Lean Beef

Omega-3 Packed

Foods

Wild Salmon
Walnuts
Flaxseed
Dark Leafy Greens

Grey Matter Matters

Chances are you've heard that eating an antioxidant-packed diet is good for your health. Here's why: Your body's cells produce free radicals, which can sometimes cause damage, leading to conditions like diabetes, cancer, heart disease and decreased brain function. Foods high in antioxidants can slow down or counteract the damaging effects of oxidation. Here is a recipe that is chock full of disease-fighting antioxidants and is delicious, too!

Pineapple-Kiwi Smoothie

Servings: Serves 1

Ingredients

- 1 kiwi, peeled and sliced
- 1/2 cup pineapple cubes
- 1 banana (preferably frozen)
- 1/4 cup strong green tea, cooled
- 2 to 4 ice cubes



Directions

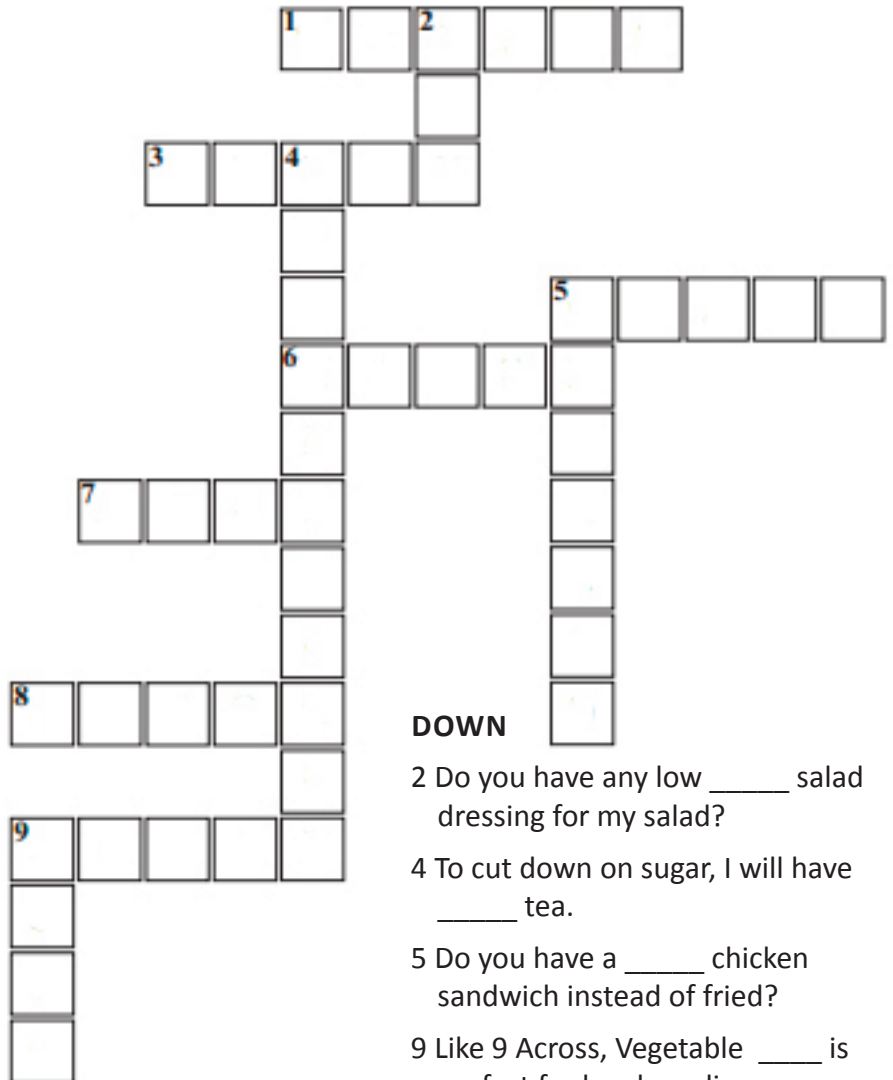
Combine all ingredients in a blender. Process until smooth. Serve immediately.

Total time: 10 minutes

SMART DINING

ACROSS

- 1 I like to order an English _____ when I eat out at breakfast.
- 3 I like to carry _____ with me to eat as a sweet, healthy dessert.
- 5 My perfect breakfast is whole _____ cereal, fruit, and low fat milk.
- 6 I used to drink a cola with meals, but now I drink _____.
- 7 I like my steak thoroughly cooked. I would like it cooked well _____.
- 8 I'd like mustard, ketchup, and lettuce on my hamburger, but please hold the mayonnaise and _____, which would add more fat.
- 9 Instead of an appetizer, vegetable _____ is perfect for lunch or dinner.



DOWN

- 2 Do you have any low _____ salad dressing for my salad?
- 4 To cut down on sugar, I will have _____ tea.
- 5 Do you have a _____ chicken sandwich instead of fried?
- 9 Like 9 Across, Vegetable _____ is perfect for lunch or dinner.