

## Module 14 Transcript

### One Day Eating for Mental Fitness

In this module let's explore some recipes and ways you can incorporate the power players and other great brain foods into your meal plan and your overall dietary pattern.

Let's start out the day with a smoothie. Now, I hear about a lot of smoothie recipes but a lot of them have the same problem – they're just filled with fruits and sugars, leading to a big bump in blood sugar, lots of energy for a few hours and then a crash. That's not at all what we want for your brain. So let's talk about a classic brain food smoothie. This is my blueberry mint smoothie, and it's one of my favorites because it's a great and refreshing way to start the day. I hear a lot of people get bored in the kitchen and especially if you're struggling with depression – the energy, creativity, and motivation to make something new sometimes can be a little bit lacking. But I really want you to double down and explore and experiment, and let me tell you one of the ways that I do that. It's thinking about my smoothies with a few basic components – and I want to show you what they are right here:

First is my base, and almost always I'm going to be using Kefir, which is a fermented dairy product. As we talked about in the microbiome module, you just get more CFUs out of kefir than really almost every other fermented product, and certainly more than any probiotic supplement. A good smoothie is going to have a nice fermented base, or just use water.

Other basic components are going to be nuts and seeds. What I particularly like is hemp or chia seeds, or pumpkin seeds. Pumpkin seeds are one of my favorites because they're so high in tryptophan, zinc and magnesium. And they add a really nice creaminess and texture to a smoothie.

I'll use a lot of different fruits for my smoothies, really depending on what I feel like. This is a great place to save money – by using frozen fruit. One of the classics is a banana, reason is you get a lot of potassium. The greener the banana the more resistant starch you get.

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Resistant starch is great for the microbiome. Bananas also add a little bit of sweetness, but not too much. So for some of my smoothie recipes I'll use things like dark chocolate powder and I'll just add in a banana for sweetness.

Here, we're using a blueberry – classic brain food. The blue and purple colors have anthocyanin molecules that are so good for our gut and our brain. Also, blueberries are a low glycemic fruit – meaning you're not going to get a big spike in blood sugar, in part because they have so much fiber.

Another classic ingredient to a brain food smoothie are leafy greens. Here I've got some mint, which really freshens and brightens up the blueberries. Sometimes I'll drop in some spinach or a little kale. Sometimes if I want a more savory or vegetable smoothie I'll use some heartier greens.

All to say – this mixture of a fermented base, some low glycemic fruit, leafy greens, nuts and seeds are a great way for you to get creative. I hope you hear my encouragement – little by little add more fiber, more nuts and fats and more leafy greens in your smoothies to make sure they're feeding you microbiome and brain. All to say, whether it's a blueberry base or using some coconut, mangoes or some other flavor concoction, there's so many ways that you can add something that's great in the morning because it's so simple to put down. Especially some mornings when you're not feeling great or hungry. A smoothie is a simple way to get a good amount of fats, fiber, protein and phytonutrients. All things we're looking for as we try to feed our brain health and mental health.

Let's talk about a couple other favorite dishes. Basil is one of my favorite things to grow in our garden. It is such a productive plant, aromatic and I love using it to make pesto. Pesto is a traditional Italian sauce, usually made with basil, pine nuts, garlic, olive oil and sometimes parmesan cheese. You can start with this basic formula, use your basil and use a

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variety of leafy greens. Maybe a little radicchio, or a little kale, or arugula. Also, there's lots and lots of garlic in pesto.

Garlic – again a great prebiotic food, those foods that contain fibers that feed the microbiome. Also, garlic's been linked to lower blood pressure, and it has all kinds of interesting antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties that I suspect prune and trim the microbiome, making sure that it's populated with the types of bacteria that best for your mental health.

Another great ingredient in pesto is olive oil.

Again, just as an example of when I say “eat more leafy greens” oftentimes people think I mean a salad. But really I'm talking about things like pesto. What I've done here is just a really, easy, simple dish. These are pieces of grilled, wild, salmon. Sometimes you can even get these pre-prepared in your grocery store or supermarket. I've put some nice pesto – ideally I make this fresh, but in a hurry I'll just use it out of a jar. I've also sprinkled on some microgreens and I've put it all on a nice bed of greens. This is a really easy way to enjoy wild salmon, and also for people who are maybe beginning to eat more seafood, and like pesto, it's a great sauce that doesn't cover up the flavor of the fish but makes it more palatable and better for folks who are entering the seafood world for the first time. Wild salmon, of course, one of our top brain foods, filled with omega-3s, complete protein, iodine, zinc, selenium, really almost all of the nutrients you need to build a healthy brain cell.

A salad is often what I hear about as a preferred, go to brain food meal. But a lot of times I see salads that are just lacking that brain food oomph that you need. So let's talk about what makes a perfect brain food salad. Here's one that we've put together in studio for you to demonstrate some of these principles. First, we see a bed of ideally organic leafy greens. It can be anything – arugula, kale, spinach, microgreens, there's so many options, and I

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hope you hear my encouragement it's time to expand your game. If you've just been consuming iceberg lettuce then we want darker, leafier greens. We want you to start expanding your leafy green palate.

So what have we done here? Classic brain food salad. First you can see... what am I doing? I'm increasing the brain food categories that we find in the salad. So you see the nuts, beans, seeds - right here delicious small red beans, and they can be any color but black beans and red beans are the two I tend to go for because you get more of those phytonutrients that are in the dark blue and black category, the anthocyanins, and then those red phytonutrients like lycopene and some carotenoids. All great for your mental health.

Here in the salad, of course we have our avocado, great way to add more fiber and more fat. A lot of times when people have more vegetarian or plant forward meals, they struggle, they get a little hungrier, they don't really feel as satiated. The remedy to this? Add more fats, and more proteins into your salad, and you're going to get that with your avocado, and also of course add in a little more fiber.

We've added in some rainbow vegetables here - the red peppers, any color works but I'm trying to, as I construct my salad, look for a rainbow. It's both visually appealing but it also tells me I'm getting a whole set of different families of phytonutrients. Again, those molecules in plants, we often call them antioxidants, but what I want you to take away from this course is that they're so much more than that. They are antioxidants, it's true, but they're also cell signaling molecules. They literally tell our cells to turn on genes that turn on health and fight inflammation and to turn off those genes that promote illness. What a great signal to send to our bodies and our brains.

Another few components to this salad, you never thought a brain food salad would be so complicated, and don't let this complication concern you. This was really easy to put

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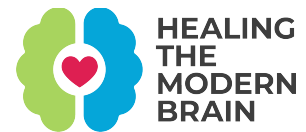
together and with a little bit of practice your kitchen is going to be stocked to whip up a brain food salad in minutes. I've added in some seafood, I've got some shrimp in this salad and I also put a little tin of anchovies down here just to encourage you, they're really one of the best things you can add to a salad. And if you don't want to drop them straight in you can use them to make an incredible Caesar salad dressing or anchovy vinaigrette.

We've also got an egg in here. Now, with that we're adding a complete protein. If you think about an egg it has every nutrient you need to build a brain cell. After all a little chick comes out an egg with a complete brain, and that's where all the nutrients came from. So a hard-boiled egg is a great add. The other thing I like about hard-boiled eggs - besides the complete protein, the b-vitamins, the carotenoids, the iodine, all the nutrients for a brain cell - I like them because they're low calorie and they're really satiating and filling. They're also incredibly inexpensive. A dozen eggs from a good quality local farmer can be as cheap as \$3/dozen and usually \$3-\$5 gets you twelve amazing, healthy eggs.

One nutrient we didn't talk about yet and I just want to mention in the course is Vitamin E. Vitamin E is one of the four vitamins that is what's called "fat soluble," it dissolves in fat. And since your brain is mostly fat, your brain is about 60% fat, we're looking for vitamins and other phytonutrients that protect fat, that are fat soluble, that dissolve in the fat and protect it from oxidation. In almonds you have one of the top sources of vitamin E. Along with that avocado, this salad is supercharged to protect your brain with tocopherols and tocotrienols, the two natural forms of vitamin E.

What's the food category we look to, to seed our microbiome with healthy good bugs, healthy bacteria, that help our microbiome be diverse, help it fight inflammation, and help it keep sending positive signals to our brain? That's right, fermented foods. And that's what I've topped this salad with - a little bit of kimchi. You'll find kimchi and other live probiotic fermented foods in the refrigerated section of your grocery store. Make sure and choose those because the bacteria are alive so they need to be refrigerated to stay that way.

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This is a great brain food salad. Nuts, beans, seeds, seafood, avocado, egg. We've got lots of healthy fats for our brain. We have a complete protein. We've got fiber and fermented foods to feed our microbiome. If you've ever been unsatisfied at lunch because your salad was a little anemic I want you to try this one out and let me know how it goes.

If you need any other reasons to come on over and join team brain food, well, I'm going to give you one: Dessert. Because when we eat for brain health, when we eat according to the rules of nutritional psychiatry, dark chocolate is not our guilty treat. It's not something that we are ashamed of. It's actually a food that we know feeds our brains and we eat it almost every day.

These are my brain truffles. And throughout all my work I've worked very hard to make sure that the sweetest treats are also amazing for your brain. So what makes a brain truffle? We use a natural sugar, in dates. We then add in nuts, hemp seeds, lots of dark chocolate, cacao nibs and roll it into a ball. There are lots of different ways to make truffles, you can use nut butters, cacao nibs, pumpkin seeds - but one of the real keys here is that you're trying to replace highly processed foods. Oftentimes these sweet treats are just filled with empty calories. But my brain truffles are filled with brain nutrition. They're filled with dark chocolate, with things like magnesium, fiber, zinc, and many b vitamins that help fuel your brain. It's not just a sweet treat, it's brain nutrition, and a delicious dark chocolate bite.

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