

Squishy Berry Muffins

1 cup natural yoghurt
½ cup light olive oil
2 large free range eggs, whisked
2 tbsp honey
½ cup chopped strawberries
½ cup raspberries
½ cup blueberries
1½ cups wholemeal self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
Serves 4 to 6

Blueberries nicknamed 'brain berries' are one of the best sources of anthocyanins which are thought to improve brain function especially in the areas of concentration and memory.

Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan).
Lightly grease muffin cups with olive oil.

Put the yoghurt, oil, eggs, honey, strawberries, raspberries and blueberries into a bowl and beat until combined. Sift the flour with baking powder and fold into the mixture, stirring until just blended. Spoon the mixture into muffin cups to two-thirds full. Bake about 15min or until cooked when tested. Cool muffins for 5min before removing from muffin cups.

TIP: For less sweet muffins use honey flavoured yoghurt and leave out the 2 tbsp of honey.



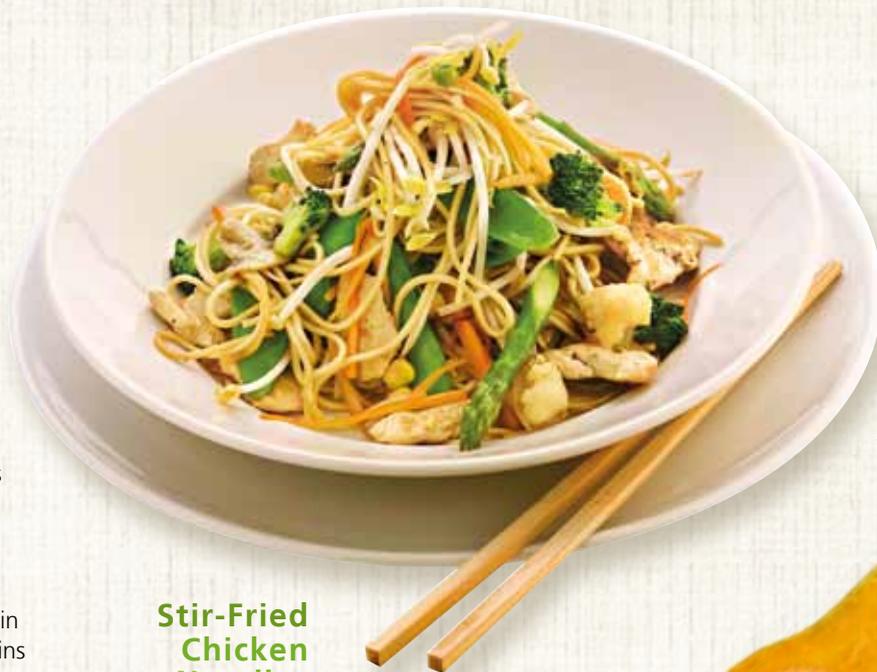
Stir-Fried Chicken Noodles

The protein from the chicken together with all the colourful vegetables help to keep the brain working well and add the noodles and you are also providing some energy for the brain.

150g dried ramen noodles
1 chicken breast, skin removed
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 cup corn niblets
1 cup finely sliced carrot
1 cup broccoli florets
12 snow peas
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1 cup bean shoots
1/3 cup sweet chilli sauce
1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce
Serves 4 to 6

Cook noodles in lightly salted boiling water for 3min. Drain. Thinly slice chicken into short lengths. Heat oil in a non-stick pan, add chicken and stir fry until golden. Add corn, carrot, broccoli, snow peas, asparagus and mushrooms. Cook 2-3min. Add bean shoots, chilli sauce, soy sauce and noodles and stir fry 2min.

TIP: Turkey can be used instead of chicken and a few sliced green beans for extra colour.



Sausage, Egg & Spinach Roll

Eggs are a rich source of iodine vital for mental development as well as Vitamin B12 helping the brain think more quickly.

2 bunches English spinach
Salt and pepper
400g pork mince
400g veal mince
200g lean beef mince
½ cup peas
½ cup grated carrot
½ cup grated pumpkin
1 cup cauliflower florets, blanched
1 egg, whisked
1 cup fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
Salt and pepper
5 hard boiled eggs, shelled and halved lengthways
Extra 1 cup wholemeal breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Serves 4 to 6



Preheat oven to 180°C (fan 160°C). Trim spinach and wash thoroughly. Blanch in boiling water for 1min. Drain and refresh in cold water. Squeeze out excess moisture, add salt and pepper to taste and refrigerate. Combine the mince with peas, carrots, pumpkin, cauliflower, whisked egg, 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs and salt and pepper. Place a sheet foil on the work bench and top with a sheet baking paper. Put meat mixture in the centre and shape into a large flat rectangle. Arrange spinach down the middle and eggs alongside. Roll meat into a log shape and wrap tightly in paper twisting ends to make a large sausage shape. Place in a baking dish and bake 30min. Meanwhile dry-fry extra crumbs with parsley. Unwrap log and roll in crisp bread crumbs. Slice roll and serve with tomato sauce and oven roasted potato wedges.

TIP: The mixture of meat adds texture and flavour. All or one variety can be used.



Recipes by Kate McGhie

SMART BRAIN FOOD



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Crumbed lamb cutlets with roasted vegetables

3 tbsp olive oil
4 wedges pumpkin, skin on
8 dutch carrots, scraped
4 desiree potatoes, peeled
8 cocktail onions, peeled
4 tomatoes
2 cups wholemeal fresh breadcrumbs
½ cup grated parmesan
1 tsp chopped parsley
1 tsp dried oregano
2 tsp plain flour
1 egg
1 tbsp milk
Extra 2 tbsp olive oil
8 lamb cutlets
Serves 6

Lamb is an excellent source of iron and zinc. Iron helps to carry the oxygen around the body and delays brain fatigue. Zinc helps brain cell function and immunity.

Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan).

Put oil into a baking dish and heat in the oven for 3min. Cut potatoes into chunks and add to baking dish with onions, pumpkin and carrots. Roast for 45min. Combine breadcrumbs with parmesan, parsley and oregano.

Put cutlets in a plastic bag with flour and shake to coat. Whisk egg and milk together. Dip each cutlet into egg mixture and then into breadcrumbs pressing lightly. Meanwhile heat a frying pan with extra oil. Add chops and cook 3min on each side until golden.

Add to roasted vegetables 20min before the end of cooking. Serve with tzatziki dip.

TIP: Pork chops can be used in place of lamb. Pork has less fat than other meats.



Tropical Fruit Crumble

A healthy dessert or 'study snack' rich in energy giving nutritious carbs such as fruit and oats so important for fuelling the muscles and brain. Almonds, a good source of magnesium, are great for the nervous system.

2 bananas
2 passionfruit
1½ cups sliced pineapple pieces
1 cup chopped mango
1 cup blueberries
½ cup orange juice
2 cups natural raw muesli
½ cup blanched sliced almonds
Serves 4

Slice bananas and put into a bowl with passionfruit, pineapple, mango, blueberries. Toss well and put into an ovenproof dish. Pour over orange juice and cover with muesli tossed with almonds. Bake in a preheated 160°C oven (140°C fan) for about 20min or until bubbling and the top is golden. Serve with chopped strawberries swirled through a low fat yoghurt.

TIPS: Sliced peeled apple or strawberries can be substituted or added to the fruit mixture.



Tuna and Vegetable Open Pie

6 slices wholemeal or chia bread
1 cup grated sweet potato
2 cups grated butternut pumpkin
½ cup cauliflower florets
2 eggs, whisked
Salt and pepper
½ cup broccoli florets
½ cup peas
1 cup corn niblets
410g canned tuna
¼ cup chopped red onion
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
Serves 4 to 6

Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan). Remove crusts from bread and flatten with a rolling pin. Line muffin cups with baking paper and press a bread slice into each cup. Boil sweet potato, pumpkin and cauliflower together until soft. Drain and mash. Add eggs with salt and pepper to taste. Cook broccoli and peas in boiling water 1min and then drain. Add to mixture with corn and tuna. Spoon into bread moulds and top with onion and parsley. Bake 20min.

TIP: Chia bread is extremely nutritious and available from specialty bakery stores. Canned salmon can replace the tuna.

It's the omega 3 fats in oily fish that make fish a great brain food, important for brain development and improved literacy. Vegetables provide the body with antioxidant power.



HELPFUL HINTS



Carrots and Onions

- Carrots are one of the few vegetables that have a higher nutritional value when cooked. Remove tops before refrigerating as the fronds drain the carrots of moisture. Give carrots space when storing: apples and tomatoes give off ethylene, making carrots bitter. Peel slices with a potato peeler, and then drop in ice water to curl. Team carrots with members of their family: dill, coriander, parsley and caraway seeds. They are pleasing with orange, cumin or bacon and in slow-cooked dishes.
- Buy plump, firm onions with papery dry skins. They are best stored in a cool dark place. If stored in a warm kitchen, green shoots appear which can be used as a substitute for chives. To minimise tears when preparing, chill onions before using to keep the enzymes inactive and use a very sharp knife to prepare them.

Berries

- Strawberries are highly perishable and must be refrigerated. Keep the berries whole with caps on as this preserves their nutritional content. Do not crowd or press strawberries, and rinse them just before serving them. To freeze, place whole and unwashed in freezer containers and store for up to 4 months.
- Choose bright plump raspberries. These berries freeze well. Spread the fruit in a single layer on a baking tray lined with cling wrap, freeze and bag. There's no need to defrost the berries before you incorporate them in your favourite recipe as they take very little time to soften.



Kate McGhie

