

Who we are

We believe that all students can learn when provided with appropriate support and learning strategies, and that achievement begins with highly individualized, research-based instructional programs designed to fit individual learning styles and needs. Closing the Gaps Learning Center is a hub for a community of learners of all ages to come together to share and strengthen the learning experience. Contact Us!

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Healthy Bites



CLOSING THE GAPS

Food and You



CLOSING THE GAPS

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The Second Brain



Some medical researchers have evidence showing that the gut may act as a second brain. While the brain controls almost every function within the body, the digestive system operates independently. Additional research shows that conceptualizing the gut as a second brain could help explain mental health and behavioral issues found in some people. This suggests that taking better care of the digestive system could help control the symptoms of behavioral issues in children

Influence Emotions



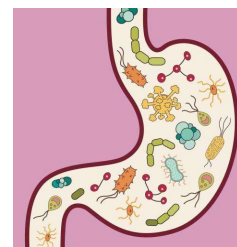
Emeran Mayer, a professor of biobehavioral sciences at UCLA, says that nerves in the gut could play a significant role in how people feel. The feeling known as “butterflies in the stomach” could be one of the most obvious signs that the second brain influences emotional well-being. In experiments, researchers at McMaster University found that they could even change a mouse’s behavior by switching the microbes from a fearless mouse to an anxious mouse. Once exposed to the fearless mouse’s gut microbes, the anxious mouse becomes braver.

School Performance and Behavior



This preliminary research suggests that the digestive system could play an important role in a student’s school performance and behavior. Students with unhealthy guts may be more likely to struggle with issues like ADHD. They may also have difficulty following orders, sitting still in class or asserting themselves in healthy ways. Even if the gut only plays a minor role in a student’s behavior and school performance, parents and educators should take time to determine how they can contribute to digestive health.

Healthy Second Brain



Maintaining a healthy gut doesn’t take a lot of work. Eating probiotic foods like yogurt, kefir, fermented foods and miso (for dairy-free diets) can help regulate the digestive system’s bacteria. Study results suggest that a whole foods diet rich in fiber, folate, and omega 3 fatty acids is most effective in decreasing hyperactivity issues ADHD and other learning disorders.

Food Triggers

Child behavior and food have been found to be closely linked. Studies show that certain foods can cause or at least worsen behavioral issues like ADHD and other learning disorders. While changing a child's diet might seem like a daunting task at first, many parents end up feeling relieved when they see positive changes in their child's behavior, because it could reduce the need for medication and other treatment options. For this reason, parents whose children have behavioral disorders should consider this list of common food triggers of behavior problems.

Dairy and Behavioral Issues



Food for the Brain reports that dairy is the most common food allergy among children, and for those who have ADHD, hyperactivity and food with dairy products seem to be associated with each other. This means that some children act out more than usual after consuming milk, cheese, yogurt, or other food with lots of dairy. Kids with a dairy sensitivity often become congested, bloated, and tired, but those are just the physical symptoms. They might also become irritable, depressed, anxious, and unable to concentrate.

Gluten and Irritability



According to ADDitude, gluten is another of the food triggers that can lead to bad behavior in kids. Gluten is mostly found in wheat, which means most types of bread, cereal, and crackers contain this common ingredient. Hyperactivity and food with gluten seem to go hand in hand in children with some sensitivity to this food. Irritability and aggressiveness are other bad behaviors that gluten can trigger.

Artificial Food Dyes and Hyperactivity



Undesirable child behavior and food dye are also often related. According to Disease Proof, food dyes are found in most processed foods, including cereal, juice, and candy. The dyes that are known for causing symptoms include Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1, and Red 40. Hyperactivity and food dyes have been linked in studies. That's probably why synthetic food dyes are actually banned in some countries, such as the UK, but most of the processed food in the US still includes them.

Getting Started

What to Include?

Foods High In Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Fish like tuna, mackerel, and salmon
Certain oils like coconut, flaxseed, sesame, and olive
Organic, grass-fed beef
Vegetables like broccoli and spinach
Avocado
Walnuts
Chia, sesame, and flax seeds

Foods High In Fiber

Whole grains
Beans
Fruit
Vegetables

Foods High In Folate

Sprouts
Asparagus
Beans
Soybeans
Dried herbs
Sunflower seeds
Dark green, leafy vegetables like kale, collards, broccoli, and spinach
Yeast extract



The sleep-wake cycle depends directly on melatonin, which reaches the highest levels in darkness. Melatonin is a hormone that regulates sleep and strengthens the immune system. Its production starts to decrease at around 30 years of age, but can be stimulated by eating certain foods that contain it. Tryptophan is an essential amino acid necessary for sleep because it induces our brain to produce melatonin and serotonin. Other important nutrients are calcium magnesium and calcium, magnesium and vitamins in the B, B1, and B6 group. There are also carbohydrates that stimulate the secretion of insulin, which in turn favors the production of serotonin. The Omega 3 and Omega 6 essential fatty acids help you to get sleep quickly because they contribute to the proper functioning of the nervous system and brain. And we cannot forget iron, which is essential for proper development of the brain.

Foods that help you sleep better



Dry Fruits, vegetables, and bananas are sources of Melatonin. Milk is rich in tryptophan. Eggs, legumes, fish and fruits such as pineapples or avocados also contain tryptophan. Honey, in

small quantities, acts as a sleep aid. A good option before going to bed is having a warm glass of milk and honey. Yogurt, for the same reason as milk is another good



Lime and valerian infusions have sedative properties. Drinking cherry juice before going to bed is an excellent remedy for inducing sleep and improving sleep quality. This is due to its high levels of melatonin.



Turkey or chicken. These meats low in fat, rich in tryptophan and easy to digest. Whole meal bread, rice, pasta and cereals. Moderate quantities of carbohydrates combined with proteins induce sleep because they boost the use of tryptophan to segregate serotonin and melatonin. Nuts and almonds are rich in tryptophan and magnesium (ideal for vegetarians).

Good Habits

In addition to considering the nutritional aspect, it is important to establish a series of rituals related to eating.



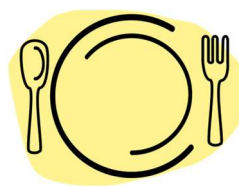
Eating dinner early.

It is appropriate to allow two hours after eating before going to bed so that the digestion process is complete. Going to bed with your stomach full slows down the digestive process.



Eating dinner at a scheduled time.

Changing the schedule affects the body's rhythms. As a result, eating late at night or missing a meal, or only having some yogurt or a glass of milk can create insomnia.



Eating a light dinner.

Avoid fatty foods. Wine, coffee, cola soft drinks, chocolate, spices and alcohol are bad for sleep and can create acidity in the stomach.



Television, mobile telephones and tablets emit intense light that impedes the adequate production of melatonin and serotonin. In order to induce sleep, it is ideal to be surrounded by the least possible amount of light, especially in the bedroom.

