

# Brain-Boosting Herbs Handout ~

There is a whole chapter on this topic in my my book *Body into Balance!*



Also check out my annotated guest article “Approaches to Cognitive Health” in the AHG Journal, available on the Blog page of my website.

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**PLEASE READ:** The information in this handout has not been approved by the FDA and does not in any way intend to diagnose or prescribe. Always consult with your health practitioner before taking any remedy.

**Above this, I also recommend that you...**

1. Research an herb in at least three good sources before ingesting it (see website for sources),
2. Listen to your body/intuition to determine if an herb resonates or doesn't resonate with you.
3. Take proper steps to ensure that any wildcrafted or cultivated plant is what you think it is, AND
4. Check with your pharmacist for herb-drug interactions if you take prescriptions.

## Brain Basics ~ Diet & Lifestyle

### General Tips: Eat More...

- Whole, *organic* foods, anti-inflammatory diet
- Check out the MIND Diet
- Low/moderate glycemic index foods & balanced meals
- Rich in omega 3 fatty acids
- Address Deficiencies: Vitamins B & D, iron...
- Avoid food allergens
- Quality Protein
- Antioxidants, circulation ↑
- Specific beneficial foods
  - Omega 3s/fatty fish
  - Berries/blueberries
  - Dark chocolate/cacao
  - Nuts & olive oil
  - Green & white tea
  - Culinary herbs & spices

### Defog Your Diet & Eat Less...

- Refined foods
- Pesticides (especially for kids and elders!)
- Sugar & high-carb/glycemic foods
- Trans fats, fried fats
- Saturated fat from factory farmed animal products (meat, dairy)
- Grilled and browned meat and carbs (AGEs)
- Excess alcohol
- Many pharmaceuticals can also have a negative effect on mood and memory. Talk to your doctor.

### Beyond Food

- 7 to 9 hours of good sleep every night
- Time outdoors
- Regular activity/movement, ideally daily
- Good social connections to family, friends, volunteering, community service
- Gratitude and optimism
- Stress management
- Mind-body balance (meditation, yoga, tai chi, art, dance...)
- Exposure to sunlight
- Brain-teasing activities & modest challenges (music)

## Medicinal Herbs to Consider (remember to check for herb-drug RX)

**Common Themes:** Antioxidant, Anti-Inflammatory, Stress-Busting (Adaptogenic), Circulation, Energizing

### Turmeric

We know this spice for its *antioxidant & anti-inflammatory* super powers. But did you know...

- A studies found curcumin to be just as effective as Prozac for treating major depressive disorder
- Turmeric consumption is also associated with a reduced incidence of Alzheimer's
- Side benefits: pain reduction, liver detoxification, cholesterol, digestion...
- RX: bloodthinners, oxalate-rich

### Gotu Kola

From the Ayurvedic healing tradition in India, this plant has a *long history of use* for *memory and cognition* in all age groups. It's an edible green, too!

- Sanskrit texts suggest near-photographic memory with regular consumption of the fresh-pressed juice.
- Studies support its ability to improve cognitive performance, working memory, and mood while preventing age-related decline.
- Side benefits: anti-anxiety, calm energy, circulation, collagen. But ensure good quality (organic).
- **Bacopa** is similarly used, both named “brahmi”

So much more at [www.WintergreenBotanicals.com](http://www.WintergreenBotanicals.com)!

### Rhodiola

Siberian energy plant traditionally used for *longevity* as well as *physical and mental energy*. Fast-acting.

- Zippy! Stress-busting energy, nerve tonic & restorative/protective, mood booster
- Studies found it useful for night-shift workers and students taking exams
- It can be too zippy for some, may aggravate anxiety, insomnia. Stomach upset - take w/food.

### Ginkgo

- The standardized extract of the leaves of this ancient tree have been used in European phytopharmacology for brain and memory health. Ginggold (EGb 761) = best studies/results. 120-240 mg, 8-12+ weeks
- The research is mixed but generally good.
- Antioxidant, boosts microcirculation, for cerebral insufficiency, cognitive performance, social functioning, slows dementia/Alzheimer's progression

### Lemon Balm

Common garden herb traditionally used as a *calming*, *anti-anxiety*, mildly *uplifting* nerve-tonic. High in *AChE-inhibiting* rosmarinic acid. Often used for *ADHD*.

- One 1,600 mg dose produced a calm state and boosted cognition within just one hour!
- Reduces stress & cortisol, antioxidant, improves working memory, cognitive test scores
- Bonus: Anti-herpes, aids sleep, anti-anxiety, hyperthyroid.
- Similar: **Holy Basil (Tulsi)**

### Rosemary

Traditionally used "for remembrance," braided in the hair of students in antiquity, added to bouquets.

- High in rosmarinic acid, inhibits AChE to boost ACh neurotransmitter levels (low levels in Alzheimer's)
- Food-like doses (750 mg) improved memory speed in elders, high doses worsened
- Improves learning, memory
- Both scent & consumption help
- Boosts circulation, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant
- Bonus: boosts digestion

### Mint & Sage

- Two more mint-family herbs that inhibit AChE - both consumption & scent boost cognition abilities.
- Studied: peppermint scent, spearmint extract intake, sage (garden, Spanish) intake & scent
- Spearmint: reasoning, attention, and planning doubled in 30 days, some improvement in just 1 day

### Lion's Mane Mushroom

This delicious edible mushroom just might do the impossible: grow and repair nerves.

- Promotes *nerve* growth/repair, contains nerve growth factors, relieves anxiety and depression
- Japanese study on elders with dementia, 3 grams of powdered lion's mane (6 caps divided) performed better on cognitive tests at 2, 3, and 4 months compared to placebo
- *Hericum* species are used similarly
- Need to continue to take it to get result

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## Brain-Boosting Recipes *(remember to check for herb-drug RX)*

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### Chickpea Snacks

In a 350°F oven, roast **chickpeas** with **olive oil**, plenty of **turmeric**, crushed **rosemary**, crushed **red pepper**, and **salt/pepper** to taste until golden and crispy. Best fresh, but later they make a nut-like crunchy snack.

### Turmeric Honey Paste ~ Golden Milk

Blend **turmeric** powder and a pinch of **black pepper** into **honey** to make a paste. You can take a teaspoon dail as is or stirred into **hot milk** (such as cow, almond, coconut, hemp, oat - the fat in these milks aids absorption).

### Rosemary Lemon Tea

Simply steep one sprig of **fresh rosemary** and a wedge of **lemon** for about 20 minutes in **hot water**, then drink.

### Holy Green Tea

Add to your favorite green tea (I love jasmine green, especially pearls) 1 teaspoon dry or 1 sprig fresh holy basil (tulsi). Steep 3-5 minutes. Also check out Organic India's Tulsi Teas in stores.

### Mint Memory Tea

Combine any/all of the following mints fresh or dry: peppermint, spearmint, rosemary, lemon balm. Steep 15-20 minutes, and enjoy.

### Brainiac Bonbons

Mix 2/3 **nut butter** 1/3 **honey** and a couple teaspoons of **dry herb powders** (cacao, hawthorn, turmeric, bacopa, holy basil, gotu kola...). Roll into balls, coat in cacao powder, toasted sesame seeds, or toasted coconut.

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Visit the Links page of **www.WintergreenBotanicals.com** for Local & Online sources for *herbs*, *supplies*, *informative articles... upcoming classes, consults, and to buy my book!*

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