IS YOUR BRAIN ON TRACK to pass the test?

By DR JEANNETTE VOS

Study, tests and exams loom for many at this time of the year, so for optimum learning and performance energy, feed your brain with fuel – carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

CARBOHYDRATES

We need carbs for brain and body energy, and complex carbs are best because they are low glycemic (GI), supplying a steady source of energy to the brain, as well as satisfying hunger. Avoid high GI carb foods such as white bread, cakes, cookies and sweets – all made with highly refined flours and sugars. They cause a spike in your glucose level, making it harder to focus and study. Sure, your brain needs sugar, because it works best with about 25g of glucose, but get those from complex carbs and you’re on track for boosting brainpower.

THE GOOD FATS

Brains need good fats. Eat avocados and omega 3 oils found in walnuts, fish, flax seeds and chia seeds to avoid learning problems and psychiatric disorders. For focused attention while you study, have sunflower and pumpkin seeds handy, and add goji berries for good sugars and alertness.

PROTEIN

Learning difficulties are often related to protein deficiency, but we can also eat too much protein causing other problems. It is generally recommended that protein makes up about 10-35 per cent of your daily calories. Meat, dairy, eggs and fish produce all the amino acids the body needs, but consider replacing some daily with plant-based proteins, which are cleaner for the brain (Google and you’ll discover a huge list). Even greens can be used for protein – wheatgrass juice has all the essential amino acids, and is nature’s finest medicine if you need a brain-booster. I add wheatgrass powder and supplements to my freshly squeezed orange or grapefruit juice on many mornings. Delicious!

Dr Vos is a certified natural health professional, raw food chef, Science of Raw Food nutritionist, Doctor of Education, and co-author of The Learning Revolution and Unlimited.