



FEED THE MIND

Food & Beverage for Brain Health

Improving your brain with what you eat might sound like science fiction, but it's a concept that's as old as cooking itself. What began with the memory-boosting benefits of ancient ingredients like mint and blueberries has evolved into an industry of supplements and additives that provide food and beverage developers the opportunity to make almost any food both delicious and functional. From the futuristic world of nootropics to the alleged secret benefits of dark chocolate, here are some of the brain-health ingredients that are literally becoming food for thought in 2021 and beyond.

BRAIN HEALTH ON THE MIND



With emotional and physical stresses of the recent year along with major changes in consumers' daily lives, consumers are interested in their mental health now more than ever. This has led to everything from consuming foods and beverages for brain health to adding brain-boosting supplements into their diet

to the more extreme "biohacking," a Silicon Valley trend in which participants attempt to optimize every part of the body, from the brain to the toes, through science.

FASTEST GROWING FLAVORS

Functional – Brain & Nervous System, Energy, Stress & Sleep
Global Introductions, Q4 2019 vs Q4 2020

■ Liquorice/Licorice.....	+400%
■ Sour.....	+300%
■ Cherry (Sour/Morello/Amarena/Tart).....	+300%
■ Grain.....	+300%
■ Candy.....	+300%
■ Cannabis/Hemp/CBD (Cannabidiol).....	+300%

SLEEPLESSNESS MEANS STRESS

43% of stressed U.S. adults say a lack of sleep contributes to their stress. Stress relief products, especially those targeting U.S. women aged 18-34, can extend to sleep benefits.

OUR BRAINS ARE ON OUR MINDS

Mintel reports that roughly 30% of people between 18-54 are interested in products that support brain health, with women of this age slightly more interested than men.

FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS ARE IN DEMAND

Increased interest means that more food and beverage brands are expected to provide functional benefits around sleep quality and stress relief.

TASTE IS KEY!

Regardless of the perceived benefits of a product, taste is still a driving force in purchasing decisions.

The brain supplements industry is estimated to continue growing at 8 percent per year and could reach \$10.7 billion annually by 2025. This growth will be driven by consumer concerns regarding depression, anxiety, anti-aging and sleep.

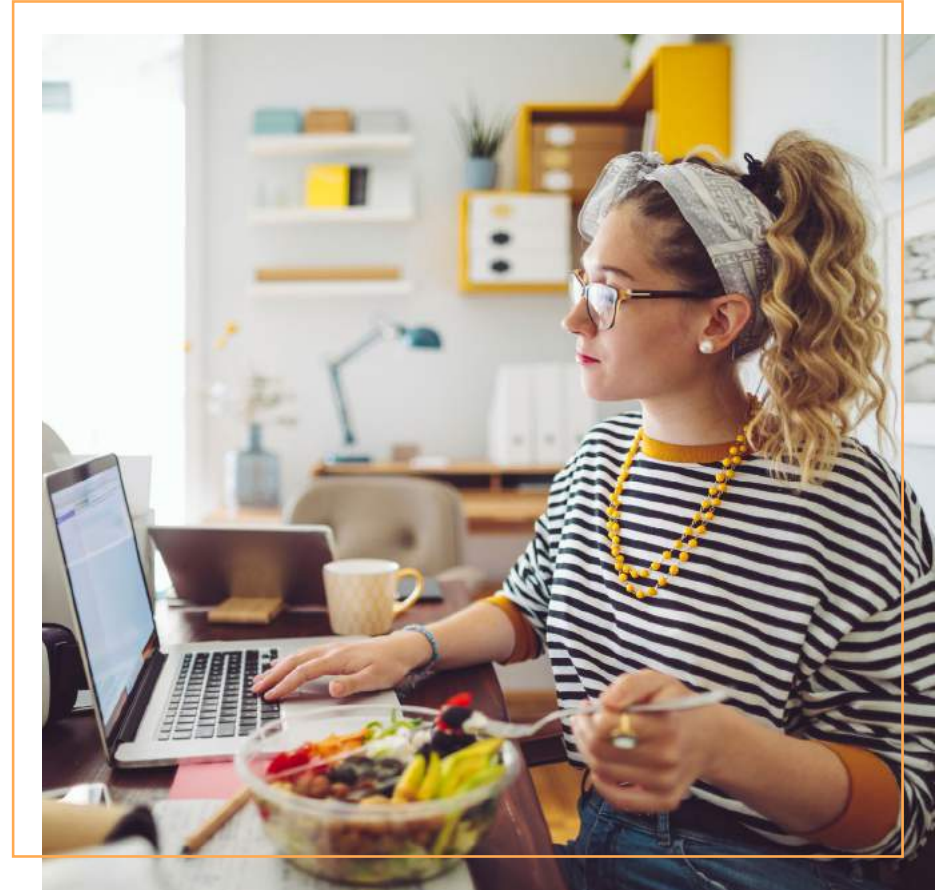
-GRAND VIEW RESEARCH

WHY BRAIN HEALTH & WHY NOW?

Facebook. Twitter. Instagram. Reddit. TikTok. Snapchat. Not to mention the news, streaming TV and our inboxes. People are overwhelmed, and it's no wonder -- we take in at least five times the amount of information we did thirty years ago. That's the equivalent of 174 newspapers every day.

This "information overload" is defined by the Information Overload Research Group as, "the result of the massive amount of information that is available for rapid consumption that can be readily accessed through various communication channels." Consumers are burned out and looking for help.

And that was all pre-COVID-19. The stress of pandemic living, coupled with a rapid and unending news cycle, has led to people's emotional and mental health becoming even more of a priority. And with consumers spending much of their time at home there has been an increase in snacking and packaged drinks, as well as a longing for increased functionality in what we consume. This means that brands in the at-home product space have an opportunity to provide offerings that both promote brain health and serve as an indulgent or tasty treat.



In the U.S., 43% of consumers say that their mental wellbeing has a higher priority since the COVID-19 outbreak.

-MINTEL

TASTY TRADITIONS

Eating foods that have a positive impact on our brain health is not a new idea. Many cultures and cuisines around the world have made use of brain-boosting ingredients for generations, and since the pandemic, interest in these ingredients has increased. In fact, Mintel reports that “plant ingredients which are cherished in parts of the world for having remedial and antioxidant effects are beginning to influence innovation in Western markets.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FLAVOR

Many traditional brain foods are naturally delicious, making them perfect ingredients on their own or in combination with tasty flavors with newer ingredients that may come with taste challenges.

- Chocolate, rosemary and mint are said to be beneficial for improved memory.
- Coffee and caffeine are said to help the brain process information.
- Nuts and seeds with lots of omega-3s have been linked to better brain function.
- Blueberries are rich in anthocyanin, another key to a healthy brain.
- Saffron has been shown in recent studies to improve cognitive function in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease.

TOP CATEGORIES

Functional – Brain & Nervous System, Energy, Stress & Sleep
Global Introductions, Past 3 Years

- Healthcare
- Snacks
- Sports & Energy Drinks
- Nutritional Drinks & Other Beverages
- Hot Beverages
- Breakfast Cereals



WHAT'S HOT IN NOOTROPICS

If you're interested in brain health, you might have seen people throwing around the term "nootropics." It's actually a new(ish) term for an old idea. In simple terms, nootropics are substances or supplements that claim to improve cognitive function.

The best-known nootropic is caffeine, but there are plenty of others. Since many nootropics don't provide the instant kick of caffeine, consumers are often skeptical of their efficacy, particularly for some of the more dramatic claims. Brands can combat this skepticism by focusing their efforts on nootropics for which there is solid scientific backing, while keeping in mind consumers priority of great taste.

COMMON NOOTROPIC SUPPLEMENTS

- Caffeine - Caffeine is said to help boost brain function, but it can also cause jitters and disrupt sleep patterns, inspiring some consumers to seek out alternatives.
- L-Theanine - An amino acid sometimes found in tea and mushrooms, L-theanine is claimed to improve focus and promote relaxation without causing drowsiness. A study in the Journal of Nutrition and Intermediary Metabolism found that it can also help reduce anxiety.
- Ginseng - A common ingredient in Korean cuisine, ginseng has been found in studies to enhance mental performance and lessen mental fatigue.

Want to learn more? [Click here for our Ingredient Hot List on Brain Boosters & Nootropics!](#)

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



BREW DR. KOMBUCHA UPLIFT WITH YERBA MATE & GUAYUSA is an organic beverage that contains green tea, and 130mg of natural caffeine to uplift.

27% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



CHIRP WATERMELON SPARKLING ENERGY WATER is described as an amazing tasting sparkling water for clean energy and hydration that features 50mg of caffeine from white tea and L-theanine for sustained energy.

41% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



KITU SUPER COFFEE DARK ROAST ENHANCED COFFEE is said to provide positive energy and nothing artificial. The drink includes vitamins and antioxidants for focus and clarity and also features L-theanine.

26% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



CELESTIAL SEASONINGS TEA WELL DAILY WELLNESS ORGANIC MATCHA GREEN TEA provides antioxidant support from green rooibos, mental vitality with Panax ginseng, digestive wellness with dandelion root and immune health from elderberry.

44% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

BRAIN-BOOSTING BEVERAGES



Chances are that most consumers are already drinking some sort of brain-boosting drink. From coffee to green tea to energy drinks, beverages are the most common vehicle for brain-health ingredients because they're metabolized more quickly than food. And, since

consumers already have an association between drinks and brain function, it's a smaller jump for them to try new products in the category.

TASTE STILL RULES

Taste is still essential for consumers. For example, Mintel reports that 39% of U.S. consumers don't drink energy drinks because they don't like the taste. However, 31% of U.S. consumers who drink energy drinks would purchase a product that promotes brain health. In fact, the number of energy drinks that make brain and nervous-system claims has doubled in the last two years. Brands can find opportunity in enhancing the taste of their products through flavor.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



DRIFTWELL, FROM PEPSICO is a functional enhanced water beverage said to contain L-theanine for relaxation. The drink is flavored with natural nootropics like blackberry and lavender.

Photo Source: Beveragedaily.com



PEACH MANGO NECTAR SMART ENERGY SUPERBRAIN PERFORMANCE FUEL is described as an anytime energy drink that contains cognizin, patented citicoline which is said to support mental focus, attention, and recall.

28% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



SOYLENT STACKED claims to fuel the mind and body with energy, focus and protein. The beverage combines multiple nootropics like caffeine, L-theanine and L-tyrosine into a "stack" for 360-degree brain health.

Source: Soylent.com



KOIOS NOOTROPIC DRINKS feature a range of nootropic ingredients such as lion's mane mushroom, coconut MCT oil and L-theanine. It is said to be a product that uses natural ingredients, backed by science in flavors such as berry genius, peach mango, pear guava and pomegranate acai.

Photo Source: Koiosbeveragecorp.com

SNACKING & HEALTHCARE



Everyone loves a good snack, but since COVID-19 has confined many to their homes during the workday, 88% of adults say they're snacking as much or more than they did before the pandemic, according to a report commissioned by Mondelez International.

And snack volume isn't the only change in consumer behavior. Pre-pandemic, snacks primarily provided energy. However, as people become more interested in functional foods, Mintel predicts that "snacks with benefits" will surge in a post-COVID-19 world. But taste will still be the most important attribute.

Outside of snacking, brain benefits can also be derived from healthcare supplements and products like mints, pills, gummies and chews for increased functionality. In fact, gummy supplements alone increased from 6% of the supplement market to 13% in 2019 according to Nutrition Business Journal.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



OLLY SOOTHING LEMON FLAVORED IMMUNITY SLEEP + ELDERBERRY DIETARY SUPPLEMENT is described as a comforting lemon blend that is flavored with other natural flavors. The product features melatonin to promote healthy sleep cycles.



ALANI NU NOOTROPIC DIETARY SUPPLEMENT CAPSULES contains Lion's Mane Mushroom to aid cognitive function and nerve health, caffeine and dynamine for mental clarity and cognizin that aids in memory enhancements and increased cognitive function.



OATMEGA CHOCOLATE PEANUT PROTEIN BARS contain DHA omega-3 fatty acid which can help improve memory and cognitive function. The bar is said to be the perfect balance of flavors and nutrients for strong brain, body and life.

33% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



NEURO GUM ENLIGHTEN MINT FLAVORED GUM is said to provide energy, clarity and focus as well as fuel the body and activate the mind. The product contains green tea, L-theanine and B vitamins to boost alertness and focus.

28% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



KRUSTEAZ CINNAMON OAT FLAVORED ENERGIZING OAT BITES MIX contains wholegrain oats, flaxseed and chia with 8g of protein. The product is said to be an energizing bite sized snack.

44% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

THE TAKEAWAYS

With daily life more complicated and stressful than ever, consumers are looking for ways to improve their peace of mind now, and ensure their mental health (literally) in the future. By tapping into the current wave of newly available nootropic ingredients and combining them with the delicious, functional flavors of foods like berries and cacao, manufacturers can serve up both taste and brain benefits. There's lots of opportunity in this space, and while beverages may be the most common vehicle for these additives and ingredients, don't miss out on the world of cognition-improving snacks and other foods-- people are hungry for them.

YOU DESERVE MORE. LET'S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let FONA's market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your "what's next." Our technical flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend. Let's mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you — every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at [630.578.8600](tel:630.578.8600) to request a flavor sample or [chat us up at www.fona.com/contact-fona/](http://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)

SOURCES

- Vox
- Trendhunter
- Food Dive
- Mayo Clinic
- Webmd
- Medical News Today
- Healthline
- Science Direct
- Fast Company
- New Hope
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