

Brain Power

In the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, Scarecrow—along with his friends Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and Dorothy and her little dog Toto—travels down the yellow brick road to meet the Wizard of Oz. He’s hoping the Wizard will help him get a brain.

Thankfully, you already have a brain! It was created by God just for you. Your brain has the power to help you do amazing things. And you didn’t even have to travel to the land of Oz to get it!



Control Centers, Computers, and Storage Boxes

Your brain controls everything you do. It is the center of the body’s nervous system. It controls thoughts, motions, and memories. Your brain sends special messages to the other organs in your body to keep them running smoothly. For example, your brain sends messages to your heart for it to continue pumping blood through your veins. It is also making sure your lungs keep breathing!

Now hold your breath for 10 seconds. Ready . . . go. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Whew! Your brain just directed your lungs to hold your breath! Your brain tells your

body what to do, but you can also tell your brain what to do. Your brain is responsible for communicating with your body when you decide to turn the page of this magazine or click the mouse on a computer.

Your brain also takes in new information and stores it in your memory—like the way a computer stores data. When you memorize a new spelling word or learn to play an instrument, it’s like clicking “save.” The new information is stored in your brain. Your brain has “storage boxes” to save the new things you learn. Whenever you need to remember the new information you have learned, your brain gets it from the “storage box.” The more you practice the new skill you have learned, the quicker you will remember it.



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

FUN Facts

The brain has over **100 billion** nerve cells called neurons that constantly send messages to your body.

There's enough **electricity** in those neurons to power a low-watt battery or a small light bulb!

The brain of an adult weighs about **three pounds**.

New brain connections are made every time a new memory is formed.

About 75 percent of the human brain is made up of **water**.

More **electrical messages** are formed in the brain in one day than all the phone messages in the world!

Love the Lord with All Your Brain

Jesus says, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind**" (Matthew 22:37). He is telling us to love God with everything in us—including our brain! With your brain you can think and feel happiness and joy. You use your brain to talk to God and praise him for who he is. Since our minds store lots of information, it is important that we save the right stuff. So memorize God's Word! Start with **Matthew 22:37**. The more we store God's Word in our brains, the better we can live by it.

Brain Food

It's very important to eat healthy foods to keep your brain strong. Here are some foods that help your brain cells stay healthy.

- Eggs—Protein from eggs helps you concentrate and stay focused.
- Greek yogurt—Also high in protein, it helps your brain cells send messages to your body.
- Green leafy veggies—Kale and spinach help build healthy brain cells.
- Fish—Salmon, tuna, and sardines help your brain stay strong.
- Nuts and seeds—These have fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals to keep your brain and body running smoothly.
- Whole-grain foods—The fiber in oatmeal, whole-grain bread, and brown rice slows down the amount of sugar your brain takes in.
- Fruits—Apples, blueberries, and plums have antioxidants to help sharpen your thinking skills.

Brain Salad

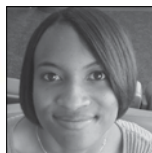
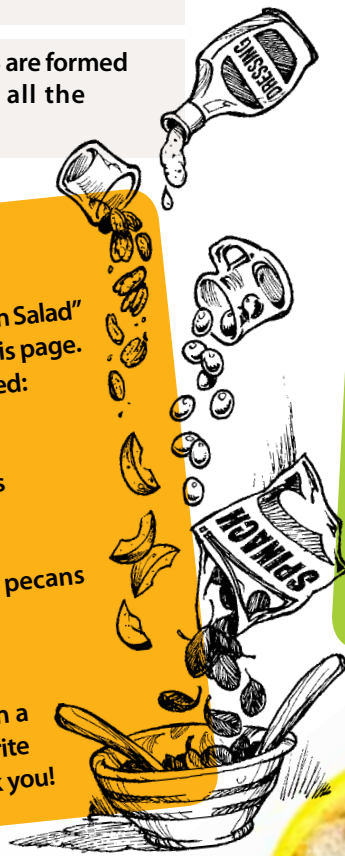
Ask a parent to help you make "Brain Salad" with some brain foods listed on this page. Here's a recipe to get you started:

What you need:

- 1 bag washed spinach leaves
- 2-3 apples, sliced or cubed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- ½ cup walnuts, almonds, or pecans
- Salad dressing

What you do:

Toss all salad items together in a bowl and serve with your favorite dressing. Your brain will thank you!



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