



## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



### Does the Wave of New Beverage Brands Boost Brain Health?

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. **There are several new beverages on the market that purport to improve brain health. Finding or fallacy? Are there findings to support these claims?***

Everybody is looking for a magic elixir, the concoction that will lead to good health, razor-sharp concentration, weight loss, or beautiful skin. Just take a look at the beverage aisle the next time you visit the grocery store. You'll find stacks of brightly colored cans containing sparkling water boosted with nootropics, probiotics, apple cider vinegar, antioxidants, turmeric, and ginger, just to name a few.

You may recognize brands like Poppi, Barcode, Ruby, Ghia, and Droplet. Pop princess Katy Perry has gotten into the act, introducing De Soi, a sparkling alcoholic drink that she claims mellows the mind with the herbs or mushrooms called "adaptogens," a term not recognized by scientists.

Do these ingredients really promote better brain health, or any of the other benefits their manufacturers claim? It's impossible to know for sure. Such drinks are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. No regulatory or trade commission has backed the advertised effects.

Of special interest is nootropics, classified as "smart drinks," because they claim to contain substances that enhance brain performance and focus. Natural ingredients in coffee and tea fall under this category as do ginkgo biloba, coconut oil, or ginseng. Synthetic supplements like creatine or some vitamin or mineral supplements are also in this category.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on synthetic nootropics, and experts cannot determine with certainty that they improve thinking or brain function, or that they are safe for everyone.

To combat this consumer challenge, the Brain Health Initiative is working with global experts, including the University of South Florida Muma College of Business, Culinary Innovation Lab and Accenture Consumer Goods & Services Global to create a Brain Health Certification of consumer products, including food and beverages, to improve consumers' awareness and literacy about brain health for a lifetime of cognitive vitality. A feasibility study is currently underway to be followed this summer by a business plan of action.

Despite the latest fads, water, coffee, and tea remain the most popular, evidence-based brain-boosting beverages. What do you prefer? Related to coffee and tea there are findings, according to a current [PLOS Medicine report](#), that drinking a combination of both was associated with a reduced risk of brain illness, including dementia and stroke. Both contain polyphenols, plant chemicals that may help fight chronic inflammation. Get the details in a Harvard Health report [here](#). Below are the benefits of each drink.

- **Coffee.** Consumption of 3 to 5 cups of black coffee daily has been consistently associated with a reduced risk of several chronic diseases. The good news? Decaffeinated coffee offers similar health benefits to the caffeinated version. It is important to note that the caffeine in coffee can be dangerous for pregnant women or those with high blood pressure. If you have high cholesterol, brew yours with a paper filter. It reduces a substance called cafestol that can raise LDL cholesterol.
- **Tea.** Green, black, and other kinds of tea are full of antioxidants, which play a role in reducing inflammation in the brain and delay age-related cognitive decline and helping prevent brain diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Caffeine and L-theanine content of tea also increases focus and alertness of the brain.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

*Water, coffee and tea may be the drinks of choice, but other beverages contain natural ingredients that have been shown to boost brain health, according to BHI NeuroNutritionist and national best-selling author Dr. Uma Naidoo, a Harvard-trained psychiatrist, nutrition expert, and chef.*

- **Kombucha.** A fermented drink usually made from green or black tea with fruits or botanicals, kombucha is often packed with multiple vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin B9, which has been found to help with memory recall and to battle degenerative conditions in the brain.
- **Orange juice, grapefruit juice, tomato juice, apple juice, blueberry juice, red wine, and white wine.** These beverages contain flavonoids, which are thought to contain mood-boosting properties. It is important to limit juice intake and drink 100% juice with full pulp. Check out this [Harvard Health report](#) about flavonoids and their brain health benefits.
- **Green juices or smoothies.** Juices or smoothies made with superfood such as kale, spinach, and arugula are dense in nutrients like lutein, Vitamin K, nitrate, folate, alpha-tocopherol, beta-carotene and kaempferol that may optimize brain health and

help delay dementia.

- **Turmeric latte.** The active ingredient in turmeric, curcumin, has anti-inflammatory properties that are understood to protect the brain from toxic damage that can lead to brain illness, including depression.
- **Beetroot juice.** Beetroot juice contains antioxidants, Vitamin A, Vitamin B-6, and iron. These compounds protect the body from inflammation and oxidative stress.

***BE BRAIN HEALTHY*** and adopt a lifestyle that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional wellbeing
- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts

**About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))**

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the ***Be Brain Healthy*** movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*** To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).