

Does what we eat affect brain performance and health?

Food plays an important role in brain performance and health. In our review "[Brain foods – the role of diet in brain performance and health](#)" we have outlined the role of diet in five key areas: brain development, signaling networks and neurotransmitters in the brain, cognition and memory, the balance between protein formation and degradation, and deteriorative effects due to chronic inflammatory processes.

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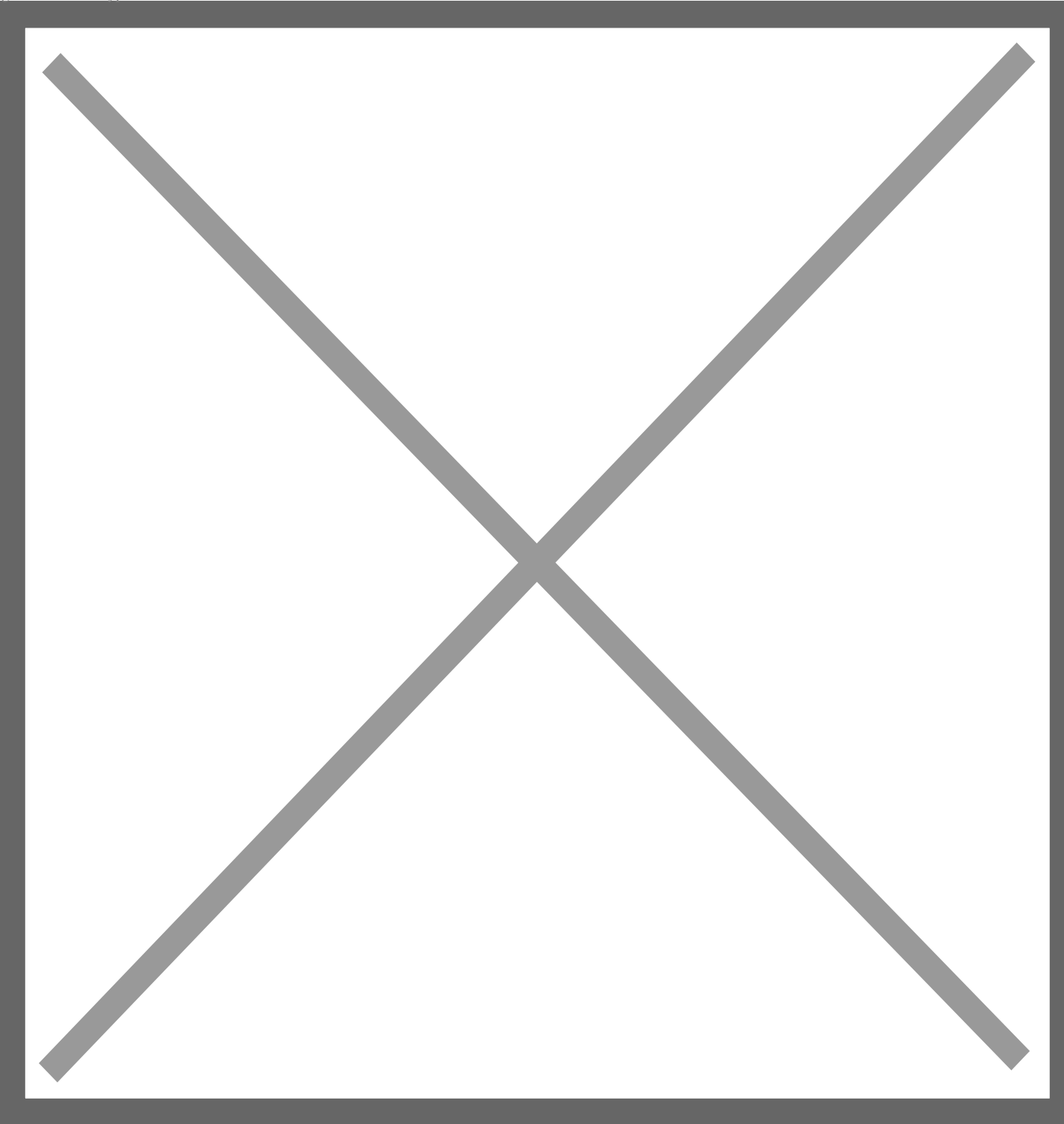
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Vitamins and minerals are as important for the brain development as for the rest of the body, and beside that they often have special roles in the brain. A few examples: vitamin B₆, B₉ (folate), and B₁₂ are important in brain development, i.a. related to [one-carbon metabolism and DNA methylation](#). Vitamin D has been called "[the neglected neurosteroid](#)" and has its own receptors in the brain. [Iron](#) is essential for development and transmission in the brain, and [zinc](#) plays a key-role in maintenance of the brain functions.

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Besides what is mentioned above, dietary components also influence the gene expression and protein synthesis [via epigenetic regulation](#). This might explain long-term dietary and pharmaceutical effects and might become an expansive field of research in the future.

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Credit: Bo Ekstrand

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