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A HEALTHY DIET FOR A HEALTHY BRAIN!

**A 52' documentary by Raphaël Hitier
Coproducted by ARTE France and GALAXIE PRESSE**



Many recent discoveries reveal that our mental health, our moods and our intellectual abilities are directly influenced by what we eat. This can occur just over the course of a few days. Yet another argument against junk food and for making our diet an ally of our intellectual and mental health...

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Laboratories all around the world are revealing that food impacts the way our brain functions. This is the case for instance with microbiota, as shown in "The gut, our second brain", but not only...

And indeed, a large hamster forced to feed exclusively on corn extracted from the cereal plains of Alsace has developed cannibalistic behavior... This phenomenon is linked to a vitamin B3 deficiency. For men, such a diet is associated with "a higher homicide and suicide rate." In Great Britain, a study conducted in prisons showed that prisoners who received vitamin supplements were much less violent than those in the control group.

As for sugar, it's supposedly more addictive than cocaine!



What about junk food? A junk food diet clearly makes laboratory rats grow fatter but it also directly impacts their memory, which deteriorates after a few days.

How can one protect ones brain? And what is the ideal diet for its proper development and preservation?

These are the questions we seek to address in this documentary, first, by deconstructing a poor diet and gradually getting our brain accustomed to an ideal diet. The ideal diet is of Mediterranean type and is far from unappetizing!

Our overabundant society is obsessed with food. We will borrow from the codes used to depict food, often displayed in very sensual ways as in the "foodporn" movement (displaying food in aesthetic and erotic ways through photos and video). We will stick to cutting edge science whilst taking a sometimes humorous or offbeat tone.

When you starve a fly, a genetic mechanism is triggered in its brain that blocks the formation of long-term memory. In other words, its stomach is connected to the brain cells and sends a

signal saying: "there's no more food, let's not waste any more energy learning things that may never be used".



What if, in the case of Alzheimer's disease, memory problems were related to our diet?

The emergence of neuro-nutrition

Neuro-nutrition is a science in motion. We will therefore indicate how reliable its conclusions and theories are by sharing the viewpoint of its detractors. This precaution is important as so many expectations, ideologies and economic interests gravitate around "dietetics and well-being". We will be particularly vigilant about overly simplistic slogans which claim that certain foods hold miraculous virtues which can enhance our memory or rejuvenate our brains.

Our statements will always be supported by scientific studies: laboratory experiments involving human guinea pigs and mice. These will allow us to go into great detail and reveal the biological and physiological mechanisms that link our diets to our psyche.

The meal will be our common thread, from "foodporn" to the virtuous plate.

From the very beginning of the film, through images and commentary, the viewer will identify with a person sitting down for a meal. His transparent skull will reveal his brain activity responding to each mouthful.

At first he eats excessively. The situation is bizarre and amusing with a comical effect. He binges off fat, sweet, unhealthy food. We are immersed in the "foodporn" aesthetic.

As the film progresses, the character reappear in the narration and healthier dishes are served (including fruit, vegetables, and fish).

As we screen through the content of his plate, we observe all sorts of foods, from those that damage brain cells to those that keep the brain healthy.



The scientific narration is structured according to the different stages of our life. The film begins with research conducted on infant feeding and its influence on the brain as it is forming. Later, the film focuses on the importance of food on the development of the brain during adolescence, then on the influence of our eating habits on our adult behavior, and finally, the impact of our diet on the ageing of our brain cells and the evolution of our cognitive abilities.

Scientific guests

Scientists will be introduced in relation to different meals (canteen, food market) throughout the film.

The food is always filmed in close-ups, as are the mouths that swallow it. By visualizing the food's journey through the body, we can understand the effect it produces on the brain.

Good addresses

This scientific journey immerses us in the world of neuro-nutrition. We will travel to different countries from a culinary perspective...

Culinary experiences

To illustrate how experiments around nutrition are carried out on laboratory animals, we will shoot, in the studio, mice feeding from dishes of junk food (pizza, hamburger, fries) and healthy food (fruits, vegetables). This film will demonstrate once again why junk food should be avoided, but not for the reasons we already know. In this case, the issue isn't weight gain or metabolic diseases associated with junk food, such as diabetes or cholesterol. For the first time, we seek to demonstrate that our diet can be a powerful ally of our intellectual and mental health...

Some of the most recent - and surprising - results of a study conducted in British prisons, showed that inmates ingesting vitamin supplements committed less violence. A psychologist from the University of Lübeck in Germany showed that the composition of our breakfast influences our social behavior. Sugar is more addictive than cocaine and a powerful agent for depression. An excessively rich diet contributes to accelerating neuro-degenerative diseases...

The Mediterranean diet seems to be the best solution for our brain cells. Antioxidants and even anti-inflammatories protect our brain cells against Alzheimer's and many other diseases!



Anything we eat that affects the balance of our microbiota is likely to have an impact on our neurons. This also concerns our psychology and relationship to others. "We are what we eat" according to German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach.

Among the topics in this documentary, you will learn about:

- Good fat for a healthy brain!
- Sugar: a drug for young mice's brains
- Fat and sugar: an addictive cocktail for adolescents
- Vitamins against bad behavior
- The influence of diet on our social interactions
- Dietetics as a treatment against depression
- How our diet can protect the brain from ageing?



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