

Brain Gunk



As a youngster, I attended a Catholic grade school. In those days we gathered for morning Mass every day. When I was in second grade I was allowed to receive Communion, but that meant I had to fast for 3 hours in advance. So no breakfast at home for me before I hopped on the bus. Instead, I took my breakfast to school with me.

Just like other children take their lunch to school, I had my little paper bag with my breakfast in it. But unlike other children, I was the lucky child of a mother who put extra time and attention into my breakfast. Most kids took one of those little boxes of cereal out of their bag for breakfast. They munched on Fruit Loops and Lucky Charms. I ate a poached egg.

Remember those little tins that pot pies came in? My mom saved them. She'd make me a poached egg and a wedge of buttered toast. She'd put both inside the little tin and cover it tightly with aluminum foil. It might be an hour or more before Mass was over and I could eat my breakfast but amazingly it was still warm. I loved it.

I was consistently one of the smartest kids in the class. I have my parents to thank for wonderful genes, but I also have my

mom to thank for feeding me brain food.



A poached egg is 2% carbs, 63% fat, and 35% protein. Your brain runs on fat. She was feeding me fat and protein that would keep me full and focused until lunch in the school cafeteria. Your brain does not run on Fruit Loops. Fruit Loops just gunk up your brain in the long run.

Now, let's fast forward to adulthood and look at this connection of brain function as it relates to weight gain.

New studies have been published to show that obesity harms most organs in your body and your brain is no exception. The researchers have also found that getting rid of excess fat actually improves brain function. As reported in Time Magazine, here's why this matters to us as we age:

Obese men and women are estimated to be about 35% more likely to develop Alzheimer's compared to people of a normal weight. Some research suggests that body fat ups the number of proteins in the brain that trigger a cascade of events that predispose someone to the disease, and other research in mice has suggested that fat cells release a substance called interleukin 1, which can cause severe inflammation and, in turn, gunk up the brain.

The tests were done on women who had received bariatric surgery but any kind of weight loss will show improvement. These women went through a battery of tests. Interestingly, *they performed better on their cognitive function tests—especially in the area of executive function, which is used during planning and organization. The findings suggest that the fat loss reverses the bad effects on the brain.*

I find this especially fascinating because I get regular reports from Plan Z dieters that mirror this result of better brain function. They tell me at first that they 'feel better'. Then they let me know how they are blown away by the fact that they think better, they are more organized and get more done in their day. They not only have more energy as a result of the weight loss but that they think more clearly now. It's all a result of getting the gunk out of their brains.

Now, let's go back to school. In a study of 1 million students in New York, results showed that students who ate lunches that

did not include artificial flavors, preservatives, and dyes did 14% better on IQ tests than students who ate lunches with these additives. So what are you and the kids having for breakfast, lunch and dinner today...and tomorrow... and forever? It matters.

Cheers,