

## Under Chef's Hat: Seasonal and Local Fruits



Joseph Stephens  
Chef

The Brain is the most complex organ of all. Trying to even delve into the smallest cell or neuron is a very daunting task indeed. So we will zero in on a few food items that may contribute to brain health and impede some age-related conditions.

You can create a diet that caters to brain development, cognitive function, and slows the aging process to lessen your risk of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

Here are the Top Five Brain Foods for your diet:

**Spinach:** Aside from building lean muscle this particular leafy green is touted with slowing cognitive decline associated with aging and risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

**Eggs:** Eggs are considered a super food, the whites are protein rich while the yolks contain a precious water-soluble nutrient called choline, which improves memory, focus, and overall cognitive performance.

**Red Meat:** We hear all the reasons why not to eat red meat. Well here is a convincing reason to dig into a nice, lean piece of steak: iron! Studies show that healthy levels of iron

improve mental functions while iron deficiency blocks oxygen flow through the body and brain causing mental fatigue.

**Walnuts:** You already know that walnuts are a rich source of Omega-3 fatty acids, but did you know that they are also extremely high in antioxidants, which promote brain function?

**Verba Mate Tea:** You already know that herbal tea promotes energy, weight loss and so much more. Well a certain brew, Yerba Mate, will also curb your mid-afternoon slump. The South and Central American tea leaves cause a similar energizing effect on the brain to caffeine, but don't follow the spike in energy with burnout.

**Food for thought:**

At Christie we try and incorporate brain rich foods as often as possible.

Dr. Neal D Barnard is one of the most responsible and authoritative voices on this subject in American medicine today. Check him out and his studies on the brain and Alzheimer's disease.

Once again ... please do not make any major changes in your diet without consulting your Physician.

## Body Mechanics: Seated Leg Adduction

The hip joint allows for the circular movement of the upper leg and is directly involved in walking and sitting movements. Having good dynamic hip stability is important, and strong leg muscles are central to that. The Seated Leg Adduction exercise helps to strengthen the inner thigh muscles.

Regularly practicing strength-based exercises for all areas of the hip will assist in improving and maintaining balance, agility, and strength.

Jeff Dubé, BSc, PTS, ATC  
Fitness Program Coordinator



- 1 Sitting all the way back in a chair, place the legs in a wide position. Loop a Theraband around the lower knee area of one leg, and hold onto the band with the respective hand as seen in the diagram.
- 2 Raise the foot off the ground to ensure that the leg is straight and then slide the knee to the inside as far as you can go while resisting with the hand.
- 3 Return to neutral and repeat 10 times. Repeat with the other leg.



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## WELLNESS QUARTERLY

wellbeing news, advice, and opinions from christie gardens staff and residents fall 2017

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### The Christie Gardens Foundation Presents:

#### Brain Health Guest Lecture and Research Study

Renowned neuroscientist Dr. Adrian Owen will be at Christie Gardens on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00pm in our main Auditorium to present an upcoming study on cognitive performance and brain health. Dr. Owen is a professor of neuroscience at Western University, and has been featured on news outlets such as the CBC, BBC, Discovery Channel, and 60 Minutes. He is also the chief scientific officer of Cambridge Brain Sciences — a tool for online cognitive assessment, lifestyle tracking, and brain health.

Due to its excellent reputation and impressive and accomplished residents, Dr. Owen's lab approached Christie Gardens to see if residents would be interested in participating in an upcoming research study. During his presentation, Dr. Owen will describe the study in greater detail, providing information about the duration and requirements, so you can decide if you would like to participate. He will also talk about his efforts to understand the human brain and ageing, and take audience questions.

For more information about the guest lecture and study sign-up information, please reach out to Claudia Osmond, Director of Education and Advocacy at Christie Gardens.

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THE BRAIN  
WEIGHS  
3 POUNDS

CONTAINS  
100  
BILLION  
NEURONS

ENTERTAINS  
60,000  
THOUGHTS  
PER DAY

IS MADE UP OF  
75%  
WATER

100,000  
MILES OF  
BLOOD  
VESSELS

GENERATES  
10-23  
WATTS OF  
ELECTRICITY

## You ARE Your Brain, Keep it Healthy!

Much of the focus on our health is about keeping cholesterol, blood pressure and your weight at a healthy level. We know increases in these measurements can affect our body negatively but did you also know that your brain is connected to your body?

**Brain health is vital to our overall body health in ways that we don't even fully understand. Yet they are intricately tied together.**

We can protect our brain in similar ways that we keep ourselves healthy. Eating well, managing stress, making healthy lifestyle choices and exercising will support overall health.

**Did you know that exercising 5 times per week for 30 minutes can keep your brain sharp and actually increase the size of your hippocampus, the part of the brain that is crucial for creating memories?**

Physical exercise generates a chemical called brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF acts like a fertilizer that encourages growth of neural connections and new brain cells.

Physical activity is important, but staying socially active is as well – especially as we age. There is growing evidence to suggest that people who avoid getting lonely reduce their risk of cognitive decline – which is something we all want to avoid. Keeping your brain active and stimulated will positively affect your brain's health.

### Challenge Yourself

Doing something that is outside of your comfort zone causes satisfaction that alters your brain chemistry to make you feel more positive.

### Change Yourself

Novelty helps your brain. Taking on new things in new situations and meeting new people are ways to develop new ideas and personal growth.

### Learn Something New

This encourages the growth of brain cells and stimulates connections between them. Stronger brain connections helps to keep your brain healthy.

**Don't let age stop you from doing the things you love or having new experiences!**

**Jocelyn Alves**

Director of Health and Wellness

ref: Alzheimer's Society of Canada

## Profile: Dr. Frank Pearce

Editor's note from Jocelyn Alves:

Recently I had the opportunity to sit down with Christie Gardens resident, Dr. Frank Pearce and talk to him about his life, and his experiences with Parkinson's and DeepBrain Stimulation (DBS) surgery. In keeping with this issue's theme of Brain Health, we have edited the interview down to focus mostly on Dr. Pearce's experiences with DBS.

**DBS is a surgical procedure used to treat a variety of disabling neurological symptoms — most commonly the debilitating symptoms of Parkinson's disease, such as tremor, rigidity, stiffness, slow movement, and walking difficulty.**

**Dr. Frank Pearce:**

Hospital time provides a space and time to reflect upon one's life in a very special way. During and after two serious operations, I felt fragile and vulnerable but also open to reconsidering the life that I had lived and quite why I had lived it that way. I was born into a working class family. We were not well-off. My parents had socialist values, from which they established criteria about what was the minimum income needed for a decent life. There should be enough of the necessities of life; clothes, shelter, heating and warmth; in one's schooling one should be encouraged and equipped to realise one's potential and in one's occupation and informal relations the same should apply. Further, one should have the freedom to make one's own moral judgements and to act upon them. A major goal was to establish a stable family life and to display loyalty to all the members of one's family. If there was opposition to these reasonable expectations then one should fight to overcome these injustices. These were minimalist demands for all members of society.

I had long believed that my mother was the main influence in my life. I admired her ability to make independent judgements about what exactly was going on in the world. She was determined that her family should find ways of compensating for the disadvantages we confronted. This led her to have disputes with anyone who was dismissive or disrespectful of her or her family – from housing to schooling, from the shops to the church, she battled for the rights of her family in what was misleadingly called a fair and just society.

Middle class people take respect for granted. When those who do not receive respect demand their rights they are not necessarily doing any more than asking that they too share in what democracy promises. In my life I have never sought privilege but the realisation of democracy's egalitarian principles. Nevertheless, I realize now that although my mother influenced me greatly, in recent years I am have become more respectful of my father's *modus vivendi* and try to practice it. My father was a facilitator, particularly in informal settings. He often found ways around problems by his willingness to hear those who held opinions he did not share, only then disagreeing, but in a way that avoided the creation of a zero-sum game. Unfortunately this sometimes means that this may lead people to be silent after hearing the words of a bigot because of a desire to avoid conflict at all costs and this can have negative consequences for those who face bigotry. I now incorporate aspects of both of my parent's strategies in living my

life. From my mother I retain my support of the under-dog. From my father, I am more considered in my actions. They were both very ethical people, we grew up with very little money but we were never left wanting for anything. As I have suggested above, my mother had a much more combative relationship with life, while my father had a much more accommodating relationship to life.

What I realized the other day is, while I always identified more with my mother, now, I am much nearer to my father in the way that I deal with conflicts with difficult people. If it's a matter of justice or people's rights to be treated how they need, then I am as strong as I've ever been, like my mother. However, when dealing with everyday challenges there is no need, for example, to get annoyed if something breaks or breakfast is late. Previously, I thought the way to stop a repetition of inconveniences was to directly confront the person responsible for it.

I made a decision after I had my operation to no longer make negative judgements public, but instead to draw attention to the problematic events carefully, often mentioning how my own actions may have played a part in the incident. This approach is based upon an implicit respect for the other person.

Such respect is also shown by making requests instead of making demands, which will foster a relationship of caring that leads to better relationships. By making a request, you are assuming the other person is competent and might know something you don't, you are making space for their ideas, and together you might find a different way of doing things.

I had two operations really, I had a brain implant and afterwards I had an embolism that required surgery. The embolism was actually quite life-threatening but I survived.

Although it's really a rather dreadful expression "don't sweat the small stuff", I've become quite aware of what that really means. As I have been getting some distance from my impulsive responses to my situation, it has become clear to me that there is a hierarchy of problems that need attending to. Some of these are more wide-ranging in their effects than are others. For example, the resolution of my general problems with not being very mobile. I've had some excellent help with these issues from my sons, my ex-wife Elaine, and some good friends, but it requires quite a lot of organizing. Dealing with them, I have also been careful not to make demands, but to make requests. This has made me very aware that time constraints limit how much can be done for me without inconveniencing the people who are helping me.

What I became very aware of, was that events in my life that have been very troublesome for me, were not necessarily motivated by ill will on the part of other people but rather an effect of circumstances they could not control.

Of some relevance, is my changing view of my experience of trying to become a Catholic priest when I was 13 by going to a seminary. After I was in the seminary for 2 years, they told me

that I didn't have a vocation. They told me I had to leave, which really quite devastated me. They handled it rather badly, it was very abrupt and it left me quite wounded actually. But in thinking about it, the seminary was probably quite underfunded. The people running it probably had a whole series of issues to deal with. Their carelessness with me was not excusable but it was really quite understandable.

**JA: Can you tell me a bit more about how you felt after the surgery?**

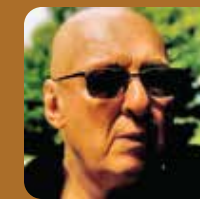
Prior to the surgery, it was discovered that I had some damage to one side of my brain, so I was not actually able to have both implants as was originally intended. So, I didn't end up with the full benefit of the physical symptoms of Parkinson's, my mobility is still affected. But I trusted the team, I trusted their judgment. I also found that my memory returned after the surgery, I was able to think clearly and process my thoughts better whereas things were more muddled before.

When I came out of the operation, I was in an extraordinarily good mood, I was in pain but I was in a good mood. This feeling stayed with me for months. It was really about trusting the doctors and the medical people, that they would do what was best for me, it was a tremendous relief, I mean, I got such a kick about cracking jokes, for weeks, finding the funny thing in the situation. I didn't plan or intend for this reaction but it was quite pleasant anyhow.

After the surgery I slept a lot, I didn't write for a while, I was reading, but the main thing was that I got my humour back. I'm British so I have this sort of self-deprecating humour. There were some very potentially annoying patients in my room at the hospital, but they never got me irritated. I found the uncomfortable interactions funny, I found a way to make a joke. I found ways to shrug aside difficulty. You can't always do this but I had a real trust in the team that worked on me. Even though the embolism might have been a result of the surgery (incidentally that seems very unlikely) it was nobody's fault, there was no one to blame. I had a lot of anxiety, but I was able to find something amusing throughout the whole ordeal.

So what I try to do now is practice a way of putting myself in someone else's place, not to deny my responsibility or theirs for unethical behaviour, but to recognize that it is not all out of malice. In a way it is malice that wounds us, but sometimes things go wrong because they just go wrong. So I've become sort of stoical about situations, that doesn't mean that in my heart of hearts I'm not ranting and raving about having Parkinson's, and worry about things deteriorating. But it means that I look for another place in human intentions in a way. I look to the pressures on people, including myself.

I think that there is a pressure in this kind of society to do too much, the expectations are absurdly high. For example, being an academic for my whole working life, I think that I experienced an immense pressure to publish. Even though I've only ever written about topics that I feel are relevant to my discipline, now I publish out of desire, writing about things I truly care about.



**Dr. Frank Pearce**  
Sociologist