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## B is for Brain food that = A+

It's back to school time and with kids eating around one-third of their daily food intake at school <sup>i</sup>, [Hort Innovation](#) is encouraging Australians to make healthy meal and snack choices that aid learning.

Hort Innovation CEO Matt Brand said Australia was in the midst of an obesity epidemic, and nutritional awareness had become critical to ensuring the health and wellbeing of kids into the future.

"A number of research studies <sup>ii</sup> delivered by Hort Innovation have demonstrated that fresh fruit and vegetables - like avocados, bananas, dried fruit and nuts are naturally geared to provide kids and adults alike with healthy and sustained energy that aids concentration throughout the day, he said.

"We are seeing a shift in attitudes towards nutrition and healthy eating and our market trend data shows that Australians are making more informed decisions at the checkout. <sup>iii</sup> This is something we hope to nurture."

Accredited Nutritionist and Dietitian, Jemma O'Hanlon, said with 1-in-4 children either overweight or obese <sup>iv</sup>, it was important to teach healthy eating habits as early as possible.

"Introducing and promoting foods like avocados for breakfast, bananas as a mid-morning snack and dried fruit and nuts as an afterschool pick-me-up will not only help your kids to stay focussed for longer, it will provide them with the nutrition they need to get through the day," she said.

"While processed, pre-packed snacks are convenient, their convenience comes at the cost of high sugar, salt and preservatives, as well as artificial colours and sweeteners that don't provide the fuel that young bodies need to concentrate and stay alert."

Ms O'Hanlon said monounsaturated fats like those found in avocados were vital for brain growth and development.

"And omega 3 fatty acids, like those commonly found in nuts, have been found to improve cognition and modify brain activation in young adults," she said.

"Research has shown that dried fruits have a low GI <sup>v</sup>, and so help to reduce blood sugar levels in the body. Bananas are high in potassium, which supports a healthy nervous system, and rich in dietary fibre - which promotes good digestion.

"Compared to a standard protein bar, which can contain up to 300 calories per serving, a banana contains less than 100 calories and will help you feel fuller for longer. What's best is nature packages it up in a convenient, ready-to-eat, single-serving.

Ms O'Hanlon said with the growing prevalence of nut allergies, and schools becoming nut free zones, the best way to enjoy them was at home as an after-school snack.

**ENDS**

**Contact:** Media & Public Affairs Manager, Farah Abdurahman on 0447 304 255 or [Farah.Abdurahman@horticulture.com.au](mailto:Farah.Abdurahman@horticulture.com.au)



## Sources

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.healthylunchboxweek.org/>

<sup>ii</sup> Almonds - <https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/help-your-business-grow/research-reports-publications-fact-sheets-and-more/al16007/>

Avocados - <https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/help-your-business-grow/research-reports-publications-fact-sheets-and-more/av18004/>

Nuts for Life - <https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/help-your-business-grow/research-reports-publications-fact-sheets-and-more/hn17002/>

Bananas - <https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/help-your-business-grow/research-reports-publications-fact-sheets-and-more/ba15005/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.horticulture.com.au/hort-innovation/news-events/consumer-insights-show-increase-in-trendy-vegetable-purchases/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/behaviours-risk-factors/overweight-obesity/overview>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0-oP8dmwC0&feature=youtu.be>

