

GEORGES HALPERN

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Georges M. Halpern was trained as a cook and is a MD and a PhD/DSc. He was a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University [1981-1983], and Professor of Medicine, and Nutrition, University of California, Davis [1983-1997]. A French and US citizen, he has worked/lectured in 143 countries, and consults with/for government and industries on medical and public health issues.

From 2003 until the end of 2014, he was Distinguished Professor of Medicinal Sciences at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; he is now Honorary Professor there, and Honorary Professor in Culinary Arts at VTC, HK. His research focuses on environmental public health issues, the role of pleasure, and Food. He has authored or edited 28 books, and hundreds of articles and chapters. He is a Commander in the French National Order of the Mérite Agricole for his original contributions to enology and French cuisine. External links: www.drgeorges.net

Environment and brains, food for thoughts

Food is physical, biological, social and ethical energy. It shapes our inner and external environment, and thus the development of our brain.

Recent findings in science have revolutionized our approach and discarded mythical dogmas on the role our environment plays on the development of the brain.

Environment refers to both our internal and external environment, the internal being our food/microbiota that modulates our brain functions and changes the expression of some genes, the external being the world we live in (and that humans uniquely change). I will discuss the role of food on our microbiota, starting with our mother's nipple. I will touch on the role of fire on safety and digestibility of our food, and our microbiota in its efficacy and adaptability. And discuss how our microbiota modulates our brain size and its complexity and the expression of some personal genes. Plus the role of agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture, and the industrial changes of the recent centuries on deforestation, mass production, selective herbicides, pesticides and antibiotics on the ecosystems and climate, and how this changing environment is changing our food and brain.