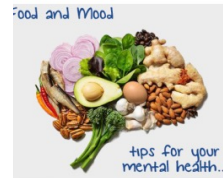


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Fuel Your Mood With Food

- Research indicates that, in some ways, diet may influence mood. Food's affect on mood is based on dietary changes which can bring about changes in our brain structure (chemically and physiologically), which can lead to altered behavior.
- All it takes is 2 hours worth of stress to completely change your gut bacteria; the stuff responsible for making many of the brain chemicals that promote healthy mood, focus and emotional regulation.



2

The Link Between Food & Mood ~ The Gut-Brain Axis



Diet can have a significant impact on our concentration, energy levels and overall mood



Food and diet is one area where simple shifts can have a big impact on our mood and emotional functioning.



Paying particular attention to what and how we feed ourself is essential to supporting our mood, attention, stress and behavior.



Research suggests that eating a healthy and nutritious diet can improve mental health, enhance cognitive skills like memory and concentration and improve academic performance.

3

Gut-Brain Connection: Meg Bowman MS, CNS, LDN, CHES co-founder & clinician at Nutrition Hive (www.nutritionhive.health)

Much like Las Vegas, what happens in your gut doesn't stay there. In other words, chemical messengers made by your gut bacteria migrate via the vagus nerve to influence brain chemistry, neurotransmitters, and even mood.

- **How?** Your gut is filled with microbial information that provides constant communication to the brain. Some messages are positive and induce feelings of safety in the body, other messages are challenging and produce inflammation that can result in depression.

Stress and the Gut:

- Stress-related disorders contribute to an alteration of the gut lining, creating "leaky gut", which allows inflammatory chemical messengers called lipopolysaccharides (LPS) to more readily travel to your brain.
- Using relaxation techniques can assist you in lessening stressors, and you can also work with a nutritionist or dietitian to select foods and supplements that have been shown to lessen the perception of stress – one example is foods high in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, chia seeds, and walnuts.
- Saffron is also a potent anti-inflammatory that is frequently used to relieve depression.

4

Send your gut messages with food



Fruits, vegetables, and other foods such as cocoa are rich in anti-inflammatory compounds.



For the chocolate lovers out there, one study showed increased calmness and contentedness within 30 days of consuming a daily drink containing cocoa polyphenols – chocolate for the win!



Blueberries are another great neuroprotective option. In a study in healthy 12-17 year olds, daily blueberry consumption for four weeks resulted in fewer self-reported depressive symptoms.



Choosing foods that are blue-purple and dark red is a great choice. Consider adding eggplant, plums, berries, peppers, beets, and purple carrots and potatoes to your dinner rotation.

5

Add probiotic-rich foods

Consuming items like naturally fermented sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, miso, and unsweetened yogurt can help build your good gut bacteria. Keeping your gut healthy by boosting your microbiota can have positive effects on your mental health.

Studies show a healthy and diverse gut microbiome can positively impact the production of serotonin, which affects our mood and sense of wellbeing as well as sleep and digestion.

A higher frequency of fermented food consumption was associated with fewer symptoms of social anxiety.

Examples:
Plain, unsweetened yogurt – Fast free to add some berries and/or a teaspoon of local honey. There are non-dairy yogurt versions for those with milk allergies.

Kefir – is a fermented drink usually made with cow's milk or goat's milk. It can be plain or flavored. Kefir also can be made with coconut water for a non-dairy version.

Sauerkraut – Look for commercial krauts in the refrigerated section of the grocery store. Kraut on the shelf or that has vinegar as a main ingredient does not contain the probiotics we're looking for.

Kimchi – is a Korean dish of fermented vegetables (mostly cabbage) and flavorings such as garlic, ginger, salt, and chili peppers. Look for commercial kimchi in the refrigerated section.

Tempeh – is made from fermented soybeans that have been pressed into a compact cake. Tempeh is often found in the refrigerated section next to tofu.

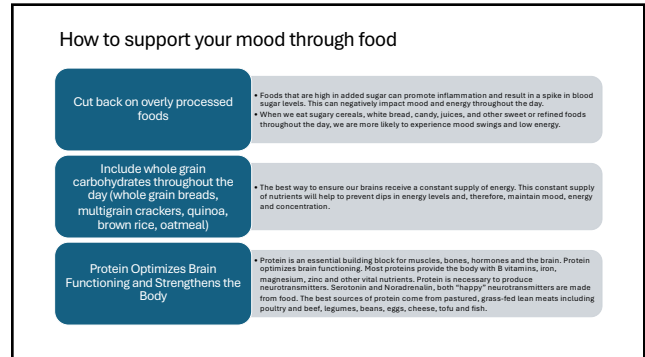
Miso – is a common Japanese seasoning that is made from fermented soybeans with salt and koji (a type of fungus). Miso can be used to make soup, to glaze cooked vegetables, and to marinate meat. Look for it in the Asian foods aisle.

Kombucha – is a fermented tea and comes in a variety of flavors and varieties. It is commercially available at most grocery stores in the refrigerated drink section.

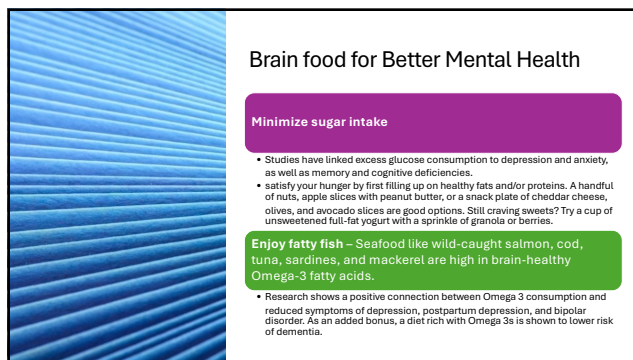
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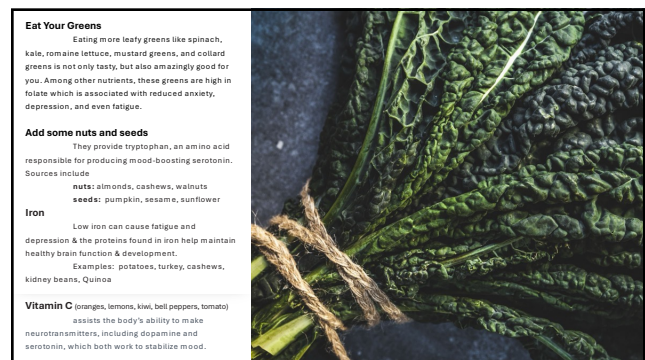
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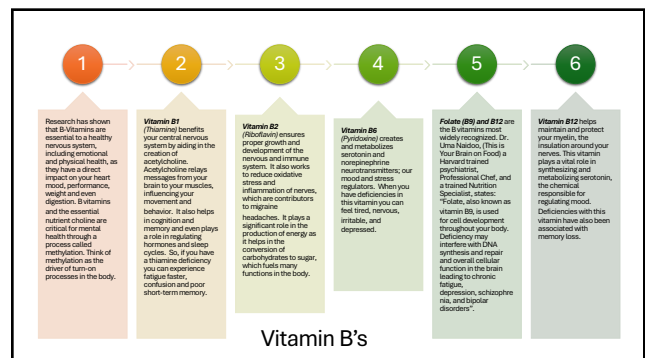
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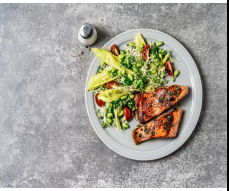
- Choose foods like these that are naturally high in B vitamins:
- Whole grains (brown rice, barley, millet)
- Meat (red meat, poultry, fish)
- Eggs and dairy products (milk, cheese)
- Legumes (beans, lentils)
- Seeds and nuts (sunflower seeds, almonds)
- Dark, leafy vegetables (broccoli, spinach) as well as brussel sprouts and asparagus (high in folate)
- Fruits (citrus fruits, avocados, bananas, pomegranate)
- Shellfish (high in folate)
- Aside from getting B-vitamins in your diet you should also consider supplementation to make sure you're never lacking in this essential vitamin. A methylated B vitamin complex would be your better bet to keep this tightly knit posse of B-complex vitamins together.

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The SMILES Trial

The **SMILES** trial (Supporting the Modification of Lifestyle in Lowered Emotional States) was one of the first studies to investigate the question "if I improve my diet, will my mood improve." In this study, conducted from 2012-2015, participants spent 12 weeks following a specific eating pattern modeled on the Mediterranean diet.

Twelve weeks later, a third of those in the intervention group showed remission of major depression, compared to only 8 percent of the control group. What's noteworthy about this trial is that there was **no calorie monitoring or restriction** on this eating pattern. Participants ate to their hunger levels and still had great results. What did they eat? Check out the recommended foods:



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SMILE Diet

- Whole Grains (5-8 servings/day): Incorporating a variety of whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice, and whole wheat bread provides essential nutrients and fiber.
- Vegetables (6 servings/day): A colorful array of vegetables offers a multitude of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, supporting overall health and well-being.
- Fruit (3 servings/day): Fruits, rich in natural sugars and fiber, contribute to a well-rounded diet.
- Legumes (2-4 servings/week): Beans, lentils, and chickpeas are excellent sources of protein, fiber, and various micronutrients, promoting satiety and digestive health.
- Dairy (2-3 servings/day): Dairy products supply calcium, vitamin D, and protein, which are essential for bone health and overall nutritional balance.
- Fish (2 servings/week): Fatty fish like salmon and mackerel provide omega-3 fatty acids, supporting brain health and potentially influencing mood.
- Lean Red Meats (3-4 servings/week): A moderate intake of lean red meats ensures a source of iron and protein, contributing to overall nutritional needs.
- Chicken (2-3 servings/week): Lean poultry options offer a lean protein source, supporting muscle health and providing essential amino acids.
- Eggs (up to 6/week): Eggs are rich in protein and essential nutrients, offering a versatile and nutritious addition to the diet.
- Olive Oil (2 tablespoons/day): The inclusion of olive oil, a staple in the Mediterranean diet, provides heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and adds flavor to meals.

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Helpful Tips:

1. **Eat regularly.** If your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and depressed. Eating regularly and choosing foods that release energy slowly will help to keep your sugar levels steady. Eating breakfast regularly leads to improved mood, along with better memory, more energy throughout the day, and feelings of calmness. Fiber, lean protein, good fats and whole-grain carbohydrates. Slow-release energy foods include: pasta, rice, oats, wholegrain bread and cereals, nuts and seeds.
2. Avoid foods which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, such as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks, and alcohol.
3. Stay hydrated.
4. Protect your gut: pre and probiotics

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Keep a food journal

- When you take into account not only the food you're eating, but also the context in which you're eating, you can gain some interesting insights into food and your mood.
- Track things like:
 - What did you eat and drink, and how much?
 - When did you eat? For example, before or after physical activity, or right before bed.
 - Did you skip a meal?
 - Were you in a good mood or a bad mood at times during the day?
 - Did you have any symptoms that might be related to food and mood? For example, did certain food choices lead to heartburn that kept you awake at night, making you tired and cranky the next day? Or did you find yourself tired and lethargic at the 2:00pm slump?
 - How does what you ate affect you emotionally? (irritable, sad, anxious?)
 - How does what you ate affect you physically? (energy, digestive issues, etc)

What are the optimal times of the day for you to eat? Are you giving yourself enough time to eat so you can have a healthier meal? Are you eating at times of day to get the right level of energy for daily activities

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Tips to incorporate mood-boosting foods

Plan Ahead: Meal planning can help you ensure you're getting a variety of nutrients across meals each week. Consider preparing meals in advance that include mood-boosting foods like omega-3-rich fish, antioxidant-packed berries, and whole grains. Planning ahead also allows you to make healthy food swaps, such as replacing refined grains with whole grains or choosing lean proteins over processed meats.

Cook at Home: Cooking at home allows you to control the ingredients in your meals, ensuring they're nutrient-rich and free from excessive sugars and unhealthy fats. For your recipes that incorporate mood-boosting foods, like a salmon salad with leafy greens, nuts, and berries or a salmon dinner with a side of roasted vegetables.

Snack Wisely: Keep healthy snacks on hand, like mixed nuts, fruit, yogurt, and whole grain crackers. These snacks can help stabilize your blood sugar levels and keep your mood steady throughout the day. Choosing snacks that are rich in fiber, healthy fats, and protein can also help manage cravings and prevent overeating.

Stay Hydrated: Hydration is crucial for mental health. Dehydration can lead to mood swings, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. Make sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day and consider adding a slice of lemon or cucumber for a refreshing twist. Staying hydrated also supports overall brain function and can enhance cognitive performance.

Mindful Eating: Practice mindful eating by paying attention to what you eat, savoring each bite, and listening to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Mindful eating can help you make healthier food choices and improve your relationship with food. It also allows you to enjoy your meals fully, contributing to a more positive eating experience.

Incorporate Variety: Eating a wide variety of foods ensures you get a broad spectrum of nutrients that support mental health. Experiment with different fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins to keep your meals interesting and nutritious. Incorporating variety also prevents nutrient deficiencies and promotes overall well-being.

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