

How Food Impacts Your Mood

Health Essentials



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“An apple a day keeps the doldrums away.”

– Anonymous

Today's Agenda

- How to make small changes to your diet to boost your mood and energy
- Top foods that positively promote energy for you throughout the day
- Additional resources which give you energy

Seven Ways to Boost Your Mood

Don't Banish Carbs -- Just Choose 'Smart' Ones

- The connection between carbs and mood is all about tryptophan, a nonessential amino acid.
- The main difference between “good” carbs and “bad” carbs is fiber. Highly refined and processed foods have less fiber and nutritional value.
- The “bad” carbs list includes:
 - * Sodas
 - * Fruit juices and drinks
 - * Bread and pasta with refined flour
 - * Candies
 - * Jams and jellies
 - * Refined grains, like white rice
 - * Most pudding, custards, and other sweets
 - * Cakes, cookies, and any sweet bakery items
- Health alternatives include:
 - * Shredded squash or zucchini in thin slices as a substitute for lasagna noodles
 - * Cauliflower for pizza dough, or to mimic mashed potatoes

Eat More Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (found in fatty fish, flaxseed, and walnuts) may help protect against depression.
- Aim for two to three servings each week.

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Eat a Balanced Breakfast

- Eating breakfast regularly leads to improved mood, better memory, more energy throughout the day, and feelings of calmness.
- What makes up a good breakfast? Lots of fiber and nutrients, lean protein, good fats, and whole-grain carbs:
 - * Oatmeal * Greek yogurt * Wheat germ * Grapefruit
 - * Bananas * Eggs * Blueberries

Keep Exercising and Lose Weight (Slowly)

- Starting an exercise plan will change your life. Exercise causes the release of phenylethylamine, a compound with a natural antidepressant and anti-anxiety effect.
- Fad dieting, however, isn't the answer, because cutting too far back on calories and carbohydrates can lead to irritability.

Move to a Mediterranean Diet

- It is a balanced, healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits, nuts, vegetables, cereals, legumes, and fish – all of which are important sources of nutrients linked to preventing depression.

Get Enough Vitamin D

- Vitamin D increases levels of serotonin in the brain.
- It can be hard to get enough vitamin D from foods. Your body can make vitamin D on its own. When you walk out into the sunlight with exposed skin, your body naturally produces vitamin D.

Select Selenium-Rich Foods

- Selenium is an important mineral; we require only a small amount daily.
- Selenium helps combat mental decline, anxiety, and depression.
- Lobster, oysters, clams, and other sea creatures contain hefty amounts.
- Other sources include Brazil nuts, seeds, lean meat, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

15 Ways to Boost Your Energy

Smart Carbs

- They are the body's preferred source of fuel, plus they raise levels of the feel-good chemical, serotonin.
- The key is to avoid sweets. Pick whole fruits, vegetables, and grains, like 100% whole-wheat bread, brown rice, couscous, and steel-cut oats.

Walnuts, Cashews, Almonds, and Hazelnuts

- These are rich in protein and magnesium, a mineral that plays a key role in converting sugar into energy.

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Lean Meats

- Lean pork, lean beef, skinless chicken, and turkey may help ease insomnia and depression.
- Turkey is loaded with tryptophan, a chemical that stimulates serotonin production and calms the brain.

Salmon

- It's rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may protect against depression and be good for heart health.
- Other sources of omega-3 include flaxseed, walnuts, beans, winter squash, extra virgin olive oil, and leafy, dark-green vegetables.

Leafy Greens

- Folate may lower the risk of depression.
- Find it in leafy green vegetables (such as spinach and romaine lettuce), legumes, nuts, and citrus fruits.

Drink Water

- Staying hydrated can help you avoid getting tired.
- Studies suggest even mild dehydration can slow your metabolism and sap your energy.

Foods High in Water

- Roughly 20% of our daily H₂O intake comes from solid foods, especially fruits and vegetables.
- Top hydrating foods: cucumbers, iceberg lettuce, celery, radishes, tomatoes, green peppers, cauliflower, watermelon, spinach, star fruit, strawberries, broccoli, baby carrots (raw), cantaloupe, and grapefruit.

Coffee

- Caffeine steps up the body's metabolism, temporarily improving mental focus and energy.
- Green tea is a better alternative because it also contains L-theanine, which is calming.

Don't Overdo Caffeine

- In people with sensitivity, caffeine may exacerbate depression.

Tea

- Because it has less caffeine, tea hydrates more effectively than coffee, and is also a rich source of immunity-boosting antioxidants known as catechins.
- All teas (black, green, or white) provide antioxidants: green tea is the healthiest.

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Dark Chocolate

- For chocolate to be called dark, it must contain at least 35% cacao and less than 12% milk solids. Most experts agree 60% cacao or higher has the most health benefits.
- When consumed in moderation, this delicious treat has some powerful health benefits.
 - * Dark chocolate contains flavonoids, which are compounds that act as antioxidants.
 - * Chocolate also contains tryptophan which stimulates the production of serotonin.

Asparagus

- This vegetable is one of the top plant-based sources of tryptophan, which helps produce serotonin.

Breakfast

- The best breakfasts deliver plenty of fiber and nutrients through whole-grain carbs, good fats, and some type of lean protein.

Smaller, More Frequent Meals

- Eat small meals and snacks every three to four hours, rather than a few large meals.
- Some options: peanut butter on whole-grain crackers, half a turkey sandwich with salad, or whole-grain cereal with milk.

Exercise for Energy

- Even a single 20-minute walk can be energizing, and if you're more active, you'll get more benefits.

Eight Additional Suggestions for Boosting Your Mood and Your Energy

- Boost your feel-good hormone (serotonin) levels with 5-HTP
- Increase levels of the calming brain chemical GABA
- Peel an orange
- Enjoy a cup of soup
- Incorporate Swiss chard into your diet
- Eat tart cherries or drink tart cherry juice
- Spice up your cooking with, cinnamon, saffron, sage, cardamom, chilies, and ginseng
- Take a zinc, magnesium, and calcium supplement

Additional Resources

Books

- *The Hormone Diet, The Supercharged Hormone Diet* by Natasha Turner
- *Eat Your Way to Happiness* by Elizabeth Somer
- *The Small Change Diet* by Keri Gans

Websites

- www.webmd.com
- www.today.com/health
- www.usnews.com/health-news

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Best Care Training Program Evaluation

Program Title: How Food Impacts Your Mood Date: _____
Your Company: _____ Facilitator: _____

Thank you for attending today's session. Please share your impressions below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree					
1. The material covered in this program will benefit my professional and/or personal life.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. The amount of material covered was appropriate for the time frame.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. The services of Best Care EAP were reviewed.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. The material was clearly presented and easy to follow.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. The facilitator was enthusiastic about the topic.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. The facilitator encouraged class participation and interaction.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. Effective examples and illustrations were used.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. The facilitator used effective presentation techniques (e.g. eye contact, vocal projection, gestures, etc.).	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I would recommend this training to coworkers/colleagues.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. What was particularly helpful about the training?										
11. What would you recommend changing about the training?										
12. If you would like to receive email updates about ongoing Best Care training opportunities, please give us your work email address: _____										

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