

Monthly Tip

Food for thought



Links Psychology
Your connection to wellbeing

Depression can be triggered by a number of environmental and biological changes. Less well known is the fact that nutrition plays a key role in depression. The brain, nervous system and neurotransmitters all require essential nutrients for optimum functioning. A lack of essential nutrients affects mood, behaviour and mental performance. According to our resident Naturopath Dr. Phillip Bayer, the following tips can help alleviate depression, reduce the side-effects of medication and improve the effectiveness of psychotherapy.

HAVE A SMOOTHIE

A smoothie is a tasty way to fight the blahs. Pineapples, plums, dates and figs contain high levels of Vitamin C, and Tryptophan and if you throw in Bananas, Vitamin B6, which is particularly effective in preventing depression. Top it up with wheat germ, and you're on your way to Wellville.

EAT THIS, SEE HOW YOU FEEL

The brain chemicals that promote a feeling of well-being, tryptophan and serotonin, are triggered by carbohydrate rich foods. Complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains, cereals, breads, pastas, and fruits and vegetables, are more likely to supply a moderate, but lasting effect on brain chemistry, mood, and energy level.



INSTEAD OF CHIPS CHEW NUTS

A healthy start for your mind must include seeds and nuts. Consider adding a handful of sunflower, and poppy seeds to your muesli, as they are rich in Magnesium and Omega 3 Fatty acids. Snack on peanuts, pistachios, walnuts, and Brazil nuts, as they are packed with Zinc, Selenium and Tryptophan.

FREEZE

One of the easiest ways to improve your diet and mental health is to stock your freezer with bags of frozen vegetables. Not only do they provide a variety of mood stabilising nutrients, but they're also convenient for throwing into soups, stews, stir-fries and instant rice dishes. Frozen vegetables are usually frozen within a few hours of harvesting, so their nutritional quality can actually be better than the fresh stuff.

THROW A SHRIMP ON THE BARBIE

When looking for good mental health seafood is the great all-rounder. Prawns, oysters, and mussels are rich in Zinc, while tuna, salmon and sardines are loaded with Omega 3 Fatty Acids.

BE SEEN WITH NUTRIENT SUPERSTARS: DRINK SPINACH AND CARROT JUICE

Per calorie a glass of spinach and carrot juice contains ultra-high amounts of six crucial nutrients: vegetable vitamin A (beta carotene), vitamin B6, folic acid, potassium, zinc and magnesium. Studies show that people who eat the most leafy greens have less depression, and physical health complaints, including, less cardiovascular disease, cancer and fewer eye diseases.

CHOOSE YOUR DOUGH WISELY

While browsing the bread aisle, grab a loaf of wholegrain. To be sure that you're a winner every time, look for the phrase "100 per cent wholemeal" or "multi-grain" on the package. Sprouted grain bread, a somewhat chewy loaf, is particularly high in Vitamins B3 and B6; Omega 3 Fatty Acids, selenium and tryptophan.