



FOOD AND MOOD - DID YOU KNOW?

GOOD FOOD FOR ALL

Low fat diets can make you depressed.

Research has linked diets that drastically cut down on all types of fat with an increase in symptoms of depression.

Turkey and chicken contain a good source of mood enhancing tryptophan, an essential amino acid which is converted into serotonin - which can be low in people suffering from depression.

Regular tea and coffee drinkers may be confusing the mental boost apparently provided by their favourite cuppa with the affects of avoiding the unpleasant caffeine withdrawal symptoms. Caffeine dependency can be acquired with as little as two or three cups drunk daily.

Contrary to popular belief, tinned tuna is not a good source of omega-3 essential fatty acids as the canning process reduces the tuna's fat content.

Carbohydrate cravings may be a subconscious attempt to raise serotonin levels. Serotonin is the neurotransmitter, or brain chemical, responsible for mood, sleep and appetite control. It is made from a protein fragment called tryptophan and this is absorbed more quickly into the brain after eating a carbohydrate meal.

Vitamin B6, vitamin C, Folic Acid (Folate) and Zinc are all essential good mood nutrients. They are needed to make the feel-good brain chemical serotonin from the tryptophan protein fragment that is found in foods such as meat, fish, beans and lentils.

Uncovering hidden food allergies can sometimes involve careful detective work. Some people with a sensitivity to chicken eggs may find that they also react to chicken meat.

Caffeine increases mental alertness and concentration and can improve performance. However, too much caffeine (and this will be a different amount for each person) has been found associated with: anxiety, cravings, depression, emotional instability, insomnia, mood swings, nervousness and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

You can avoid the highs and lows of mood and energy associated with fluctuating blood sugar levels by choosing foods that are digested slowly. These foods have a low Glycaemic Index and include whole-grain rye bread, oats and basmati rice. High GI foods, which are best avoided, include french baguettes and instant white rice.

The romantic associations we have with chocolate may be due to the effects on the brain of a naturally occurring substance called phenylethylamine (PEA). PEA can enhance endorphin levels, increase libido and act a natural antidepressant. Sugar can also increase levels of the body's natural endorphins and chocolate bars often contains appreciable amounts of sugar. These mood-altering effects of chocolate may be why it is easy to become 'hooked on' chocolate.

Source: *The Food and Mood Project Handbook, Amanda Geary, www.foodandmood.org*



FOOD AND MOOD - 10 GOLDEN RULES TO MAXIMISING YOUR HEALTH

GOOD FOOD FOR ALL

Following this regime can increase your mental energy, improve your mood and sharpen your mind.

- 1.** Eat wholefoods - wholegrains, lentils, beans, nuts, seeds, fresh fruit and vegetables - and avoid refined, white and overcooked foods.
- 2.** Eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day. Choose dark green, leafy and root vegetables and fresh fruit. Eat bananas in moderation. Dilute fruit juices and only eat small amounts of dried fruits.
- 3.** Eat four or more servings per day of wholegrains such as rice, millet, rye, oats, whole wheat, corn or quinoa as cereal, breads and pasta.
- 4.** Avoid any form of sugar, and foods with added sugar.
- 5.** Combine protein foods with carbohydrate foods by eating cereals and fruit with nuts or seeds, and starch foods with fish, lentils, beans or tofu.
- 6.** Eat oily fish. A serving of herring, mackerel, salmon or fresh tuna two or three times a week - good vegetable protein sources include, beans, lentils, quinoa, tofu and 'seed' vegetables. If eating animal protein, choose lean meat, organic whenever possible.
- 7.** Eat eggs - preferably free-range or organic.
- 8.** Eat seeds and nuts. The best seeds are flax, hemp, pumpkin, sunflower and sesame.
- 9.** Use cold pressed seed oils. Choose an oil blend containing flaxseed oil or hemp oil.
- 10.** Minimise your intake of fried food, processed food and saturated fat from meat and dairy products.

Source:
Optimum Nutrition for the Mind
Patrick Holford, 2003