



# FOOD & MOOD

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Did you know that food and mood can go hand in hand? If you nourish your body with delicious yet healthy food, chances are, you're probably going to feel pretty darn good. If you live on a diet of white rice and french fries, the opposite is probably true. Our overall dietary pattern is like one big puzzle that interlocks with environmental and social factors, including STRESS! Don't forget to move your body, get adequate sleep and practice self-care!

## LINDSEY'S 10 FOOD & MOOD TIPS:

### EAT IN A MEDITERRANEAN STYLE

A Mediterranean type diet relies on a range of good mood nutrients including Omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins and minerals found in whole grains, eggs, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables. A diet rich in nutrients such as magnesium, vitamin B12, folic acid, iron, and vitamin D are essential for good brain health. Most likely, one meal is not going to magically create good mood; however, a regular diet full of healthy nutrients can be beneficial in the long term.

### PROTEIN

Protein may not only help increase alertness, but it also contains the amino acids tryptophan and tyrosine, which can ultimately end up as the feel good brain chemicals serotonin and dopamine. Choose lean meats, poultry and fish, in addition to vegetarian sources such as dairy, beans, eggs and tofu. Sources originating from animals, like meats or yogurt also contain vitamin B12.

### COMPLEX CARBS

Complex carbohydrates like whole grains are rich in feel good nutrients like B vitamins, choline, magnesium, selenium, and zinc. They're also rich in fiber, which keeps the gut healthy and increases fullness and satiety. Carbohydrates may help to increase the availability of tryptophan, which can turn into serotonin. Keep things interesting by trying new grains like farro, quinoa, millet, or black rice. Sweet potatoes count too!

### EAT SEAFOOD

Omega-3 fatty acids, specifically the components known as DHA and EPA, may help to lower the incidence and severity of depression. While there are other types of Omega-3s, such as ALA, DHA and EPA are preferred for brain health. Our bodies cannot make these beneficial polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs), which means consuming them through diet is necessary. EPA and DHA are found in fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, herring, lake trout and mackerel. The American Heart Association recommends at least two 3.5oz fish meals per week for general health.

## HYDRATION

Even mild dehydration can affect your mood negatively, so be sure to hydrate throughout the day! Drinking water may help make you more alert. Staying hydrated not only includes drinking fluids, but also eating foods that contain water such as fruits and vegetables and prepared foods like soups and smoothies. Drink mostly water and limit juices, sodas and caffeinated beverages. Try squeezing a wedge of citrus into your water for some added flavor.

## EAT BREAKFAST

People who eat breakfast are more likely to experience positive mood than those who don't eat at all. You don't need to have a fancy sit-down breakfast to reap the happy benefits. Grab something to go like a smoothie, spinach and egg breakfast wrap, whole grain cereal bar, or yogurt and fruit. A protein and fiber containing meal can help to stave off hunger until lunchtime.

## EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Healthy nerve cells are vital for a positive mood. Keep them in good working condition by eating more fruits and veggies! Your brain will reap the rewards from loads of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants! Antioxidants are powerful free-radical fighting machines that may combat inflammation. Just a few nutrients that act as anti-inflammatory antioxidants are vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium.

## IT'S OK TO HAVE SNACKS

Most of us know that grouchy feeling we get when we've waited too long to eat a meal. Not only do many of us then binge on unhealthy choices, but we may also feel guilty for having made a poor choice. By eating smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day, you may feel more energy and therefore feel happier. Choose healthy snacks like cut up vegetables and hummus, yogurt and granola, or hard boiled eggs smashed with fresh dill and tahini (sesame paste).

## KEEP THE MICROBIOME HEALTHY

The gut microbiome plays a role in our mood so eat that good bacteria known as probiotics! You can get probiotics from whole foods such as Greek yogurt, Icelandic skyr, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, kefir and miso. Make it a point to include probiotics in your diet every single day. Don't forget to eat fiber called prebiotics, which act as food for the probiotics and will help them thrive! Beans, apples, bananas, artichokes and whole wheat are some examples.

## DRINK TEA

Tea contains an amino acid called theanine, which may give you wakeful relaxation by increasing the neurotransmitter GABA and reducing excitatory brain chemicals that can amplify anxiety and stress. Also, theanine may help to increase BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor) which keeps our brain cells healthy and even promotes the growth of new neurons. If you need a warm beverage to sip on in the afternoon, try a cup of jasmine green tea.

