

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

MOOD FOODS

What we eat and how we feel are connected. More and more research is revealing the intimate relationship between the gut and the brain, making a strong connection between food choices and your mood.

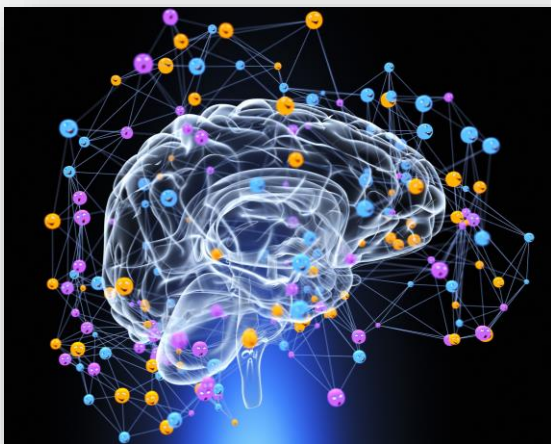
Both positive and negative moods and behaviours can be altered by diet. What we eat can even affect our sense of right and wrong. The food we eat is not just satiating the basic need to fill our stomachs. Food is active both biologically and chemically in our body and it affects

every part of us - physically, emotionally, and mentally. Nutrients from food (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, etc.) are needed to produce brain chemicals and neurotransmitters that help you to think clearly, regulate your behaviour, and act in socially acceptable ways.



Have you wondered why people tell you to “go with your gut” to make a decision or why you feel “butterflies in your stomach” when you are nervous?

This feeling is coming from your enteric nervous system - a “second brain” hidden in the wall of the digestive system linking digestion, mood, cognitive function, and health. Following good nutrition principles as well as including foods that promote the production of neurotransmitters will benefit your mood, your brain, and promote overall health.



Neurotransmitters & Mood

- 1 **Dopamine** signals the brain to increase mood and regulates emotions. It's estimated that 50% is made in the gut.
- 2 **Serotonin** is a mood stabilizer. A deficiency can result in depression. 90% is made in the gut.
- 3 **Tryptophan** is a brain-signaling chemical that is a precursor to serotonin.
- 4 **Tyrosine** is a building block to the epinephrines, which are stimulants to the brain. It aids in alertness and focus, and elevates mood.

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Nutrition Strategies for Mood Maintenance

Remember to eat often (every 2-3 hours) to keep your blood sugar balanced.

Giving your body a continuous source of fuel will help to keep your blood sugar in a healthy range, which can assist in keeping your mood stable. Include plenty of protein, fibre and good fats in your diet.

Know what to avoid. The wrong food choices can be linked to emotions like sadness, anger, irritability, anxiety, and aggression. Limit processed foods, sugar, trans fats, additives, artificial colours and preservatives, alcohol, and caffeine, which can aggravate mood. Focus on a natural, whole-food diet that can have a positive effect on your well-being.

Add variety to your diet and rotate your foods. Important nutrients like vitamin D, B complex vitamins like B6, B9, and B12, omega-3 fatty acids, amino acids, protein and fibre are all essential for mood balance. The greater the range of whole foods in your diet, the broader the range of mood-boosting nutrients you will consume. Try new foods, new colours, new flavours, and don't limit your taste buds!



Top 10 Foods for Healthy Moods

- 1 Dairy Products**
Yogurt, Milk
- 2 Eggs**
- 3 Fish**
Mackerel, Salmon
- 4 Leafy Greens**
Spinach, Kale
- 5 Whole Grains**
Oats, Quinoa
- 6 Root Vegetables**
Carrot, Sweet Potato
- 7 Meats**
Turkey, Chicken
- 8 Nuts**
Brazil, Walnuts, Almonds
- 9 Beans & Legumes**
Lentils, Edamame, Chickpeas
- 10 Healthy Oils**
Olive, Grapeseed, Avocado

Sources: <https://www.livestrong.com/article/544393-l-tyrosine-vs-l-dopa/>
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