

FOODS & FEELINGS



You Are What You Eat

There is a meaningful relationship between what we eat and how we feel. Of course, many different factors can influence how we feel including stress, environment, poor sleep, and mental health concerns, but food can also play a part. Unhealthy eating habits can negatively alter our mood and emotional well-being. The food-feeling connection stems from the close relationship between your brain and your gastrointestinal tract, sometimes called the *second brain*.

Here's how it works:



Our GI-tract is home to billions of bacteria that influence the production of neurotransmitters, which constantly carry messages from the gut to the brain. Eating healthy foods promotes good bacteria, which positively affects neurotransmitter production. An unhealthy diet, on the other hand, can cause inflammation, hindering the production and function of neurotransmitters. When neurotransmitter production is functioning well, our brain receives positive messages and our emotions reflect that. When production goes awry, our mood follows suit.

When we are more aware of how foods can affect how we feel, we can make better choices about what we are eating.

TIPS Using Food to Improve Your Mood



1 Pay attention to when you eat.

Your last meal of the day should be 3-4 hours before you sleep. Avoid heavy meals - a light snack is ok, but avoid carbs and sugars. Our bodies should ideally fast for 12 hours each day – generally while we sleep. This helps us feel lighter and wake up with more energy.

2 Eat a balanced diet.

Proteins like lean poultry, fish, and Greek yogurt help maintain a stable mood. They slow down the absorption of carbohydrates, which help in the release of dopamine and norepinephrine, both which help you stay calm and focused.

3 Choose “smart” carbs.

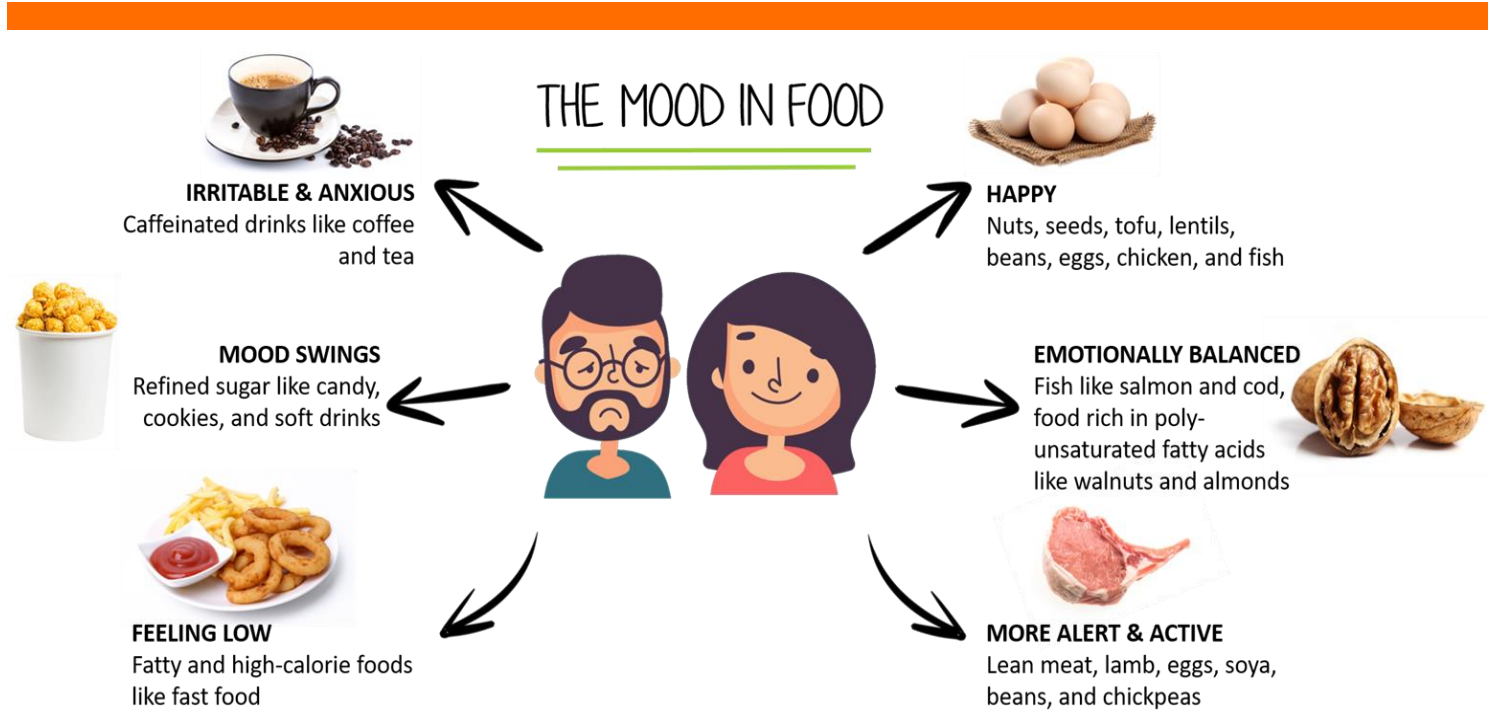
Eating too many refined carbohydrates, like white breads and cookies, cause blood sugars to rise and fall rapidly. This can lead to low energy and irritability. Instead, choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

4 Eat your vitamin B12.







When we're stressed or feeling down, vitamin B12 breaks down in our bodies. Top it up with leafy greens, lentils, salmon, and oats. Complex carbohydrates also help in releasing the “happy hormone”, serotonin.

5 Don't forget about water.

Water plays an important role in our food consumption. Sometimes rather than hungry, you're actually thirsty and dehydrated, which can make you feel sluggish and irritable. Try drinking some water and wait 10 minutes to see if you're still hungry.



FEEL-GOOD FOODS

<p>Fatty Fish It's all about the omega-3 fatty acids. Fish should be on the menu weekly. Choose salmon, herring, rainbow trout, tuna, or sardines.</p>	<p>Fermented Foods Up to 90% of your body's serotonin is produced in your gut (your second brain, remember?). Add kefir, yogurt, kombucha, kimchi, and sauerkraut to the menu.</p>	<p>Vitamin D The sun is our main source of vitamin D but aim for 600IU from food each day. Choose fatty fish, beef liver, cheese, and egg yolks.</p>	<p>Dark Chocolate It is a high-calorie food, so 1-2 small squares of 70% or more cocoa solids will do the trick.</p>
<p>Selenium-Rich Foods 55mg of selenium is recommended per day. Choose seafood, nuts and seeds (especially Brazil nuts), lean meats, and whole grains.</p>	<p>Vitamin B12 + Folic Acid Find folic acid in beans and greens and B12 in meats, fish, and dairy. The power is in the combination.</p>		
			

Sources www.cairowestmag.com/how-food-affects-our-mood/ | webmd.com | Images from Freepik.com