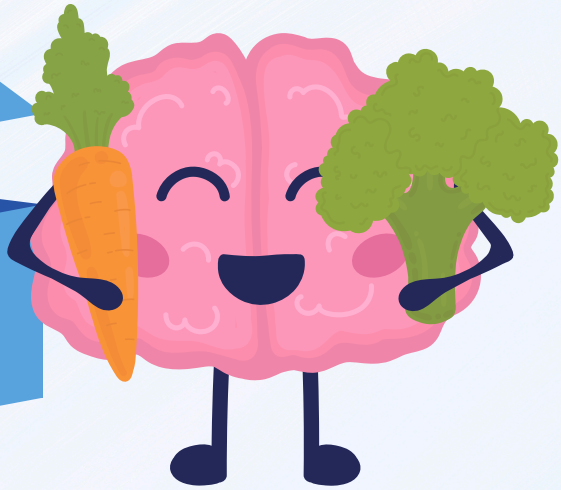
# Food & Your Mood



Food impacts not only your physical health but also your mental and emotional well-being. Your gastrointestinal (GI) tract and brain have a close relationship that links diet and emotion.

The GI tract has billions of bacteria that influence the production of chemicals which carry messages from the gut to the brain. Dopamine and serotonin are common examples

"Good" bacteria positively affects the production of these chemicals. Optimal production allows your brain to receive positive messages loud and clear, improving your mental state.

"To promote "good" bacteria and improve your mental state, eat nutritionally dense food. This includes whole foods (minimally processed), fiber, antioxidants, and fermented foods.

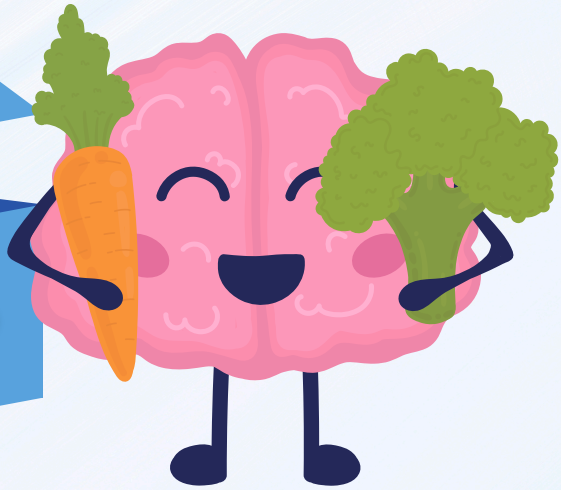
Avoid foods that feed "bad" bacteria. One of the main foods to avoid is sugar. Although sugar can temporarily increase dopamine (the feel good chemical), it is fleeting and followed by a crash.

A nutrient dense diet allows for fewer mood swings and improved focus. A clean, nutrient dense diet can also help with symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Information from Aetna.com

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# Food & Lifestyle Recommendations



Healthy fats: Polyunsaturated fats are important for the brain and modifying inflammatory pathways. Sources include seeds, walnuts, salmon, sardines, and mackerel

Vitamin D: Inadequate vitamin D is linked to symptoms of depression. Oily fish is one of the few foods rich in Vitamin D, but being in the sunshine is the optimal source.

B Vitamins: B vitamins such as folate (B9) are important in producing chemicals that regulate mood. For those who don't eat animal-derived products, B12 can be difficult. Fortified soy products and nutritional yeast will help, though.

Complex carbs: Complex carbs help with "good" gut bacteria. They are more slowly digested, offering a gradual release of energy and reduces spikes. Sources include vegetables, legumes, and buckwheat.

Fermented foods: Cultured and fermented foods help to promote a healthy gut, leading to a positive mood. Sources include yogurt, kefir, fermented vegetables, sauerkraut, pickles, and kimchee.

Water: Without water, the trillions of chemical reactions that energize your body and stabilize your mood would not be possible! Dehydration can negatively impact mood as it can lead to fatigue and irritability. Stay hydrated!

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