

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information,
contact: Tyler Johnson
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Agent, Wildcat Extension District
tajohnson120@ksu.edu, 620-232-1930

Food for your Brain and Mood

Normally, there are a number of actions we can take to help improve our mood. Many of these same behaviors also promote brain health. For example, if you are stressed from work, usually a dinner with coworkers or friends help ease some of the stress. With social distancing, many of the support system we use to turn to are no longer available. Still, there are many different healthy outlets to help you deal with everything currently going on in your life. According to neuroscientists, some of the healthy outlets are types of music to relax and mindfulness.

Another healthy outlet to improve your brain power and lift your mood is by watching what you eat and drink. Certain types of food are known to help improve your mood and boost your ability to think. This impact on your brain and mood is due to the vitamins and minerals they contain. As with most things, remember to do things in moderation.

Beverages

What you drink is an important part of nutrition. It is important to drink plenty of water each day. I addressed this in an earlier article about the importance of hydration. When talking about importance of beverages to your brain and mood, hydration is the most important factor, but there are others. Coffee and tea play a role in helping your brain and mood. Naturally occurring caffeine is being studied for its effects on mental functions like memories. Additionally, it is being studied for its impact on mood. Be careful though. Adding a lot of sugar or flavoring to your coffee or tea reverses much of the health benefits.

Dark Chocolate



Source: [Harvard Medical School](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

Chocolate made from 70% or more cocoa is full of many health-promoting flavonoids. These flavonoids are known to increase blood flow to your brain, boost brain health, and reduce inflammation. These flavonoids may, also, support mood regulation. Additionally, the pleasant taste, texture, and smell may promote someone having a good mood. It is important to limit dark chocolate to 1 or 2 squats since it is a high calorie food.

Fermented Foods

Fermented foods like kimchi, kombucha, sauerkraut, and yogurt are full of probiotics that may improve gut health and mood. This is because probiotics support healthy gut bacteria and increase levels of serotonin. It is important to understand not all fermented foods are a good source of probiotics. This is due to the cooking and filtering process involved in the fermentation process. Examples of fermented foods that are not good sources of probiotics are beer, certain breads, and wine.

Lean Healthy Proteins

Lean healthy proteins come in a different forms. Some come from animal source while others come from non-animal sources. The big health push toward eating salmon is due to it being a good source of lean healthy protein. If you are not a fan of salmon, albacore tuna is another fish with the two types of Omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon. Studies are showing Omega-3s play a number of key roles in brain development. Additionally, some evidence is showing Omega-3s from fish oil lower risk of depression.

If you are not a fan of fish, there are other options for lean healthy proteins. They do not contain Omega-3 fatty acids, but they have their own benefits. Non-fish sources of lean proteins include beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds. All four of these sources contain healthy fats and fiber. Beans and lentils also are a great source of vitamin B. Vitamin B is known to help improve mood by increasing levels of mood regulating neurotransmitters. Studies have linked moderate consumption of nuts to a lower risk of depression. Certain nuts and seeds contain vitamins and minerals important for brain function and may lower your risk of depression.

Vegetables and Fruits

Eating more vegetables and fruits has a strong association with improved brain functioning and mood. Vegetables and fruits are full of vitamins, nutrients, and antioxidants. At the same time, different types and colors of vegetables and fruits contain different amounts and types of nutrients. This difference in nutrients by color is why we are told to eat the rainbow.

Whole Grains

Whole Grains are another food packed with nutrition to help your mood. The fiber found in whole grains helps slow your digestion of carbohydrates. This allows for a slow and steady release of sugar into your bloodstream. This steady release helps stabilize your energy level giving you energy for more of the day.

Please contact me to schedule an appointment or for more information, contact Tyler Johnson, tajohnson120@ksu.edu, or by calling 620-232-1930.

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