

FOOD AND MOOD: HEALTHY EATING TIPS

If one of your goals for 2022 is to eat healthier, we've put together 12 ideas help get you started and 8 foods with mood-supporting nutrients.



Improving your diet may help to improve your mood, give you more energy and help you think more clearly. Knowing where to start and what changes to make can seem overwhelming, so check out our list below and make eating healthier more manageable by choosing just one or two small changes to start with.

12 Steps to Eating Healthier

1. Eat regular meals and don't skip breakfast
2. Stay hydrated - replace sugary fizzy drinks with sparkling water
3. Make some healthy food swaps, for example swap whole milk for semi-skimmed, white bread for wholegrain, swap the frying pan for grill or oven
4. Eat plenty of protein, such as nuts, eggs, beans, lean meat and dairy products
5. Cut down your caffeine and sugar intake, and eat less salt (no more than 6g a day for adults)
6. Eat plenty of fruit and veg - 5 a day is the recommendation
7. Eat the right fats - cut down on saturated fat
8. Try at least one new healthy recipe a week
9. Eat more slowly
10. Eat from a smaller plate
11. Base your meals on higher fibre starchy carbohydrates - keep an eye on the fats you add when cooking or eating, e.g. butter on bread, creamy sauces, as that's what increases the calorie content
12. Eat more fish, including a portion of oily fish a week

Adding nutrients, trying new foods, cutting down on others and portion size, can all help in achieving a more balanced, healthy diet. Rapid or drastic changes to your diet can sometimes do more harm than good, so it's important to instead try to incorporate some of these changes slowly if you're wanting to make your overall diet healthier.

Evidence also suggests that as well as affecting our physical health, what we eat may also affect the way we feel. Many of us are guilty for reaching for high-sugar, calorie-rich foods when we're feeling low, but while these might give you a bit of a sugar rush and help you feel better short term, they're unlikely to help long-term.

Mind share tips to help you explore the relationship between what you eat and how you feel and Healthline suggest that eating these eight foods will help to boost your mood:

1. **Fatty fish** - Fatty fish like salmon are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may lower your risk of depression.
2. **Dark chocolate** - Dark chocolate is rich in compounds that may increase feel-good chemicals in your brain.
3. **Fermented foods** - Since up to 90% of your body's serotonin is produced in your gut, a healthy gut may correspond to a good mood. Fermented foods like kimchi, yogurt, kefir, kombucha, and sauerkraut are rich in probiotics that support gut health.
4. **Bananas** - Bananas are a great source of natural sugar, vitamin B6, and prebiotic fibre, which work together to keep your blood sugar levels and mood stable.
5. **Oats** - Oats provide fibre that can stabilise your blood sugar levels and boost your mood. They're also high in iron, which may improve mood symptoms in those with iron deficiency anaemia.
6. **Berries** - Berries are rich in disease-fighting anthocyanins, which may lower your risk of depression.
7. **Nuts and seeds** - Certain nuts and seeds are high in tryptophan, zinc, and selenium, which may support brain function and lower your risk of depression.
8. **Beans and lentils** - Beans and lentils are rich sources of mood-boosting nutrients, particularly B vitamins.