



# Food &

# mood

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# HOW THIS GUIDE MAY HELP YOU

Some foods we eat contribute to symptoms and illnesses that many people experience. Some of these include:

Depression

Anxiety

Insomnia

Pre Menstrual Syndrome

Post Natal Depression

ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis)/CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome)

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

Schizophrenia

Fatigue

Confusion and inability to make decisions

Experiencing these problems or illnesses can also affect how a person feels about eating. For example, feeling anxious or depressed can result in a loss of appetite or lack of interest in food. However, eating regularly and eating certain foods can have a positive impact on our mental health, and the symptoms associated with poor mental health.

As you read through this booklet, you will find ideas, tips and recipes to help motivate and inspire you to make changes to your diet to improve your mental health. The actions you can take are highlighted throughout the booklet like so:

**Action:** Now take the first test.



# TAKE A TEST

## HOW DO YOU FEEL?

- |                                  |                          |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anxious, nervous, frightened.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Depressed, low in mood, 'down'.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mood swings                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restless                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Easily stressed / Stressed       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tearful                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aggressive                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unreal, Strange, Woozy, Detached | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Panicky                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Low in energy / Tired            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY?

- |                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Fast heart beat.              |
| Increased blood pressure      |
| Food cravings                 |
| Chest feels tight and painful |
| Aches and pains               |
| Bloating                      |
| Constipation                  |
| Dehydration                   |
| Nauseas                       |
| Dizzy, Shaking, Fainting      |
| Headaches                     |

## HOW DO YOU THINK?

- |                                      |                          |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Can't think straight                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can't concentrate                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hearing your own thoughts            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Imagining the worst & dwelling on it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Negative thoughts                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mind preoccupied by food             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- |                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Lose interest in things       |
| Get snappy and irritable      |
| Difficulty remembering things |
| Become / Get aggressive       |
| Restless                      |
| Become hyper / Under active   |

There are a number of things you can do to help with symptom such as visiting your GP, pharmacist or discussing with other health professions.

However, there is evidence to suggest making changes to your diet can help with these symptoms. This guide suggests changes you might like to try.

No matter how small, any change will lead you to gain positive benefits.



# FOOD & MOOD: WHAT WE KNOW

**Not drinking enough water** can make you feel tired, low in energy and unable to concentrate. This is because the body is around  $\frac{3}{4}$  water and 2 litres (8 glasses) is needed every day to replace lost fluids (more on a hot day or after exercising).

**Action:** Drinking water and non-caffeinated drinks throughout the day will keep the body hydrated.

**A diet low in fruit and vegetables** may contribute towards a range of mental health problems. This is because a balance of vitamins and nutrients are needed to keep the brain healthy.

**Action:** Aiming to eat 7 (eating at least 5) portions of fruit and vegetables a day will provide a healthy balance of many of the nutrients needed.

**Eating a diet low in Omega 3 (and sometimes 6) fatty acids** may contribute towards a range of mental health problems. This is because the food we eat, and how much we eat has an impact on how efficiently our mind and body works.

**Action:** Eating lots of 'essential' or 'polyunsaturated' fats, such as Omega 3, is thought to have a positive effect on how well our brain cells function and communicate with each other, and the rest of the body.

Essential fats such as Omega 3 are not produced naturally by the body and so can only be obtained through the food we eat or supplements. Eating lots of foods such as oily fish (for example: mackerel, salmon, tuna), walnuts, linseed oil and spinach at least 3 times a week can provide a healthy source of Omega 3 fatty acids.

**Let us explore this further...**

# TAKE ANOTHER TEST

A good starting point can be to look at the food you are eating now. This can then form a basis for making any changes.

**Action:** Think about the food you have eaten over the last 7 days. Take a look at the list of food below and tick whether you eat them a lot, sometimes or not at all. You may want to take this test again in a few weeks to see if you have made any changes – use a different colour pen to track the changes you have made.

In **RED** are high in solid fats, sugar or caffeine and so may have a negative effect on your mental health.

You don't need to stop eating or drinking any of these completely but you may want to try to cut down.

For example if you drink 6 coffees per day, try reducing to 5 for 2 weeks, and then to 4.

In **GREY** are high in vitamins, minerals, and omega 3 fatty acids and so may improve your mental health. A healthy diet would involve eating lots of these foods.

**Action:** Try introducing some of the foods from the green list to see if you like them.

Aim to have more ticks in green foods than red foods.

	I EAT OR DRINK THIS EVERY DAY	I EAT OR DRINK THIS SOMETIMES	I NEVER EAT OR DRINK THIS
Cakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pies or Pasties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fried Foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Butter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coffee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fizzy drinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crisps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sugar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oily fish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walnuts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nuts oils (linseed oil)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spinach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watercress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pumpkin seeds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seaweed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# WAKE UP WITH WATER!

Water is essential for life. Dehydration can cause poor concentration, headaches, tiredness, nausea and constipation. As most of our body is made up of water, about 8 glasses (2 litres) are needed per day to replace lost fluids (more if it is a hot day or you are exercising).

Many people suffer from dehydration even if they do not feel thirsty. So how do you know if you are dehydrated? A good way of knowing is by the colour of your urine! A pale straw colour is healthy. If your urine is a dark yellow colour, you will benefit from drinking more water.

Action: Next time you wee, note the colour you see! If dark, drink more water.

**Tip:** Planning water breaks throughout the day may help you to remember to drink more. Keep a bottle of water with you when you are on the go.

If you really dislike the taste of water, ensure that your fluids are maintained by drinking alternatives, such as cordial (squash), pressed fruit juice, or milk drinks. However, be careful of the sugar and caffeine content of some other drinks.

If you really dislike the taste of water, ensure that your fluids are maintained by drinking alternatives such as fresh fruit juice or milk drinks. Again, be careful of the sugar and caffeine content.



## WATER RECIPES

Add a slice of lemon or lime to give extra taste

Add cordial (squash) to a glass of water

Add a slice of lemon to warm water

Try fruity or herbal tea

Freeze a bottle of water overnight to have iced water on the go, during the day

Add ice cubes made from fresh fruit juice or cordial

Make ice lollies from cordial and water or fruit juice and water



## FEELING FABULOUS WITH FATS

Eating these foods at least 3 times per week can provide a healthy source of omega 3 fatty acids which may improve your mood. Omega 3 (and sometimes 6) fatty acids can be found in oily fish and other food, including:

- Fresh Tuna
- Salmon
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Pilchards
- Rainbow Trout
- Shrimp
- Crab
- Sardines

Canned fish can also be used, but check the labels as some brands of tuna may have had the omega 3 oils removed during processing. Omega 3 oils are also found in:

- Flax seeds (also known as linseeds)
- Flaxseed oil
- Rapeseed oil
- Hemp oil
- Walnuts
- Spinach
- Seaweed
- Watercress
- Pumpkin

### Tips

- Use the oils in salad dressings.
- Scatter walnuts or pumpkin seeds over salads or snack on them during the day.
- Replace your cooking oil with those from the list above.
- Add spinach leaves to salads, soups, cook as an extra vegetable with a Sunday roast or add to pasta sauces.
- Have a fish barbeque instead of other meat.
- Mash a tin of sardines in tomato sauce on toast for lunch.
- Fish is quick and easy to cook - pick up free recipe cards for fish from the supermarket or the internet.

Omega 3, 6 and other nutrients can be taken as supplements, in addition to food. However, if you consider taking supplements ensure they have an approved kite mark. Alternatively consult your pharmacist or GP for advice





## 7 A DAY - WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Eating a variety of fruit and vegetables will give you a good balance of vitamins and minerals which are needed to keep the brain healthy.

Many fruits and vegetables are high in folic acid, vitamin C and potassium and are also a good source of fibre and other substances, such as antioxidants. All these nutrients are important for your health.

It is recommended that you try to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. This can include fresh, frozen, chilled, dried or canned fruit and vegetables, as well as 100% pressed fruit juice (not from concentrate).

# 7 A DAY - YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## How much is 1 portion of fruit?

About a handful. For example, half a large grapefruit; a slice of melon; 2 satsumas; 5 dried apricots; 1 tablespoon of raisins; 1 medium apple; 1 medium banana or 1 medium pear.

## How much is 1 portion of vegetables?

About a handful. For example, 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots; peas or sweetcorn; 1 cereal bowl of mixed salad; 7 cherry tomatoes or 2 large broccoli florets.

## Can't I just take vitamin pills?

Not really. Dietary supplements do not have the same benefits as eating fruit and vegetables. This is because fruit and vegetables also contain fibre, preventing constipation and slowing down sugar absorption into the blood stream.



## Tips

Chop fruit and add it to your breakfast cereal.

Have fruit for snacks and dessert.

Stir fry vegetables only take a few minutes to prepare and are a tasty meal.

Chop celery and carrots into sticks for a crunchy snack.

Try new ways of cooking vegetables – peppers, tomatoes, onions, courgettes and aubergines taste great when grilled, baked or roasted.

Add salad to your sandwiches for extra colour and crunch.

Grating vegetables or using a spiralizer makes them look more appetising.

Try swapping white potatoes for sweet potatoes.

Add cauliflower and broccoli to macaroni cheese.



## WILL A BETTER DIET COST MORE?

Fruit and vegetables are cheaper if you buy them in season and are freely available in all major supermarkets. Look out for wonky vegetables and supermarket basic ranges for cheaper options.

Fish can be expensive but tinned fish can be an alternative to fresh. However, it is no more expensive than other meat.

**Tip:** Try substituting a meat meal for a fish meal, once a week.

Recipes are freely available on the internet and if you are unsure what to do, look up on You-Tube, or ask friends and family (it's free). Be brave and try foods you haven't had before – you will be pleasantly surprised. Always start by including the fruit and vegetables you know you like and remember that frozen can be as good as fresh.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINE

Trying to develop a regular routine can help to give structure and focus to your day. Eating at regular intervals is essential to maintain energy and blood sugar levels. You could start by writing a shopping list and planning your meals and snacks for the week. Try to work towards having 3 meals per day with small snacks in between.

Below is an example of a schedule that you may want to use, or make up your own to suit your own lifestyle and body clock.

Time of day	Meal / Snack	What you eat & drink
8am	Breakfast	Porridge & Tea
10.30am	Snack	Banana & Coffee
1pm	Lunch	Tuna sandwich, fruit & yoghurt with water
3:30am	Snack	Raw carrots, water
6pm	Dinner	Chicken, vegetables & potatoes
8pm	Evening Snack	Boiled egg with a slice of toast

# TOP TIPS



To help you get started, here are some top tip, taken from staff and volunteers at a community café in Manchester. Try them out for yourself.

- “Chop up carrot and cucumber into sticks to snack on through the day”
- “I fill up 2 bottles with water and carry them with me through the day to drink. I feel healthy.”
- “You get a nice natural feeling from drinking water”
- “I cook fish in my steamer. It makes it really easy, just put it in, sprinkle with some herbs and it’s done”.
- “Using a steamer is a really healthy way to cook food, and you can throw just about anything in there – meat, potatoes, rice – it’s easy!”
- “Cook some pasta, and then stir in some tinned tomatoes and tuna. Sprinkle with cheese and bake in the oven ‘til it melts.”
- “I carry seeds with me to snack on – sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are really nice.”
- “When I cook I make a big batch. Then put some in containers and freeze it so I have a stock of meals ready made”.

Steamers are a good investment. They can go on a gas or electric hob or plug in. You can cook several foods at once, saving on energy bills and promote healthy eating.



## HERE ARE SOME IDEAS THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO TRY FOR SNACKS

For a sweet tooth try a small bag of dried fruit and nuts, yoghurt or banana.

Chopped melon or pineapple (tinned is good).

Whizzing up fruit smoothies is a great way to get energy and work towards 7 a day.

Try oat cakes or rice cakes as an alternative to sugary biscuits

Eating a slow release carbohydrate food such as porridge an hour before bed can help you to get to sleep

Can you think of any other snacks that you could keep with you?



## FRIENDLY FOODS

Making changes can be fun and easy Here are a few suggestions:

If you live with others, sit down together for dinner. It may sound simple – but it's not often that we sit down together in our households to eat. It's a good time to share and catch up with what's been going on in each other's lives.

Next time you go out for the day, to the beach, or a park, take a packed lunch or a picnic. It's cheap!

If you have children cook with them and have fun.

Get out and about – find out where your local markets are and when they run, is there a fruit and vegetable van, or shop, in your area?

Is there a food and mood group running in your area that you could join, try your library? Some local colleges and adult education centres run cookery classes that you can take.

Experiment – try new foods, find you-tube recipes to try.



# MAKE BIG CHANGES IN SMALL STEPS

## STEPPING STONES

Write below changes or steps you think you could make. Hopefully this booklet has given you some ideas that you might like to use, or, you can think up some of your own

Today I will...

I like these fruit...

I like these vegetables...

I will try...

In 3 weeks I will have tried 3 new fruit and vegetables:

Date:	I tried:	Like / Dislike
Date:	I tried:	Like / Dislike
Date:	I tried:	Like / Dislike

# USEFUL CONTACTS



Mental Health issues can affect anyone. For further help, advice and support, including food and mood contact:

**The Mental Health Foundation:**

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/d/diet-and-mental-health>

**Mind, for better mental health:**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/#.WqkIr2rFLZ4>

**The Royal College of Psychiatrists:**

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/eatingwellandmentalhealth.aspx>

**Rethink Mental Illness:**

<https://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/looking-after-your-mental-health/food-and-your-mental-health>

For general advice regarding mental health issues contact:

**Mental Health Foundation** - Improving the lives of those with mental health problems or learning difficulties.

020 7803 1101

**Together** - Supports people through mental health services.

020 7780 7300

**The Centre for Mental Health** - Working to improve the quality of life for people with mental health problems.

020 7827 8300

**Depression Alliance** - Provides information and support to those who are affected by depression via publications, supporter services and a network of self-help groups.

0845 123 2320

**BACP Find a Therapist Directory** - Through the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) you can find out more about counselling services in your area.

01455 883300

**Anxiety UK** - Works to relieve and support those living with anxiety disorders by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy.

08444 775 774

**PANDAS Foundation** - PANDAS Foundation vision is to support every individual with pre (antenatal), postnatal depression or postnatal psychosis in England, Wales and Scotland. We campaign to raise awareness and remove the stigma. We provide our PANDAS Help Line, Support Groups offer online advice to all and much more.

0843 28 98 401 (every day from 9am-8pm)

**Help for Hoarders**

<https://www.helpforhoarders.co.uk/what-is-hoarding/>

## ADDED BONUSES

There are other benefits of eating well. It can:

- **Prevent and treat certain diseases.**

Your diet may prevent the risk of developing cancer and heart disease. It is also helpful in treating diabetes and high blood pressure. Following a healthy diet may also reduce symptoms of poor physical and mental health, helping you to manage better.

- **Feel energetic and manage your weight.**

A healthy diet will increase energy, and help you fight stress. By adding regular exercise you will be able to manage your weight.

- **Enjoy life. Food is an important part of social and cultural events.**

Not only does it provide nutrition but it can bring people together. Cooking fresh, healthy meals can be an enjoyable way to spend time, either on your own or with others.



# USEFUL CONTACTS

**Samaritans** - Call free from any phone. You do not have to be suicidal to phone.

116123 - Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Or check out their website at:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us>

## Support for children and young people:

**Young Minds** - Provides information and advice for anyone with concerns about the mental health of a child or young person.

020 7336 8445

**Childline** - Nightline, Listening, support and information service run by students for students.

0800 1111 Free, national helpline for children and young people in trouble or danger.

## Other places you could go for general advice and support:

**Citizens Advice** - Gives free confidential information and advice to help people sort out their money, legal, consumer and other problems.

**Age Concern** - Information line on issues relating to older people.

0800 009966

**Lesbian and Gay Switchboard** - Provides information, support and referral services.

020 7837 7324

**Refugee Council** - The UK's largest organisation working with refugees and asylum seekers.

020 7346 6700

**Relate** - Offers advice, relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and support.

0300 100 1234

**Teacher Support Network** - A 24/7 telephone support line which gives teachers access to professional coaches and counsellors 365 days a year. The network also campaigns for change within schools and education policy in order to improve the wellbeing, mental and physical health of teachers.

08000 562 561

## Carers organisations

**Carers UK** - The voice of carers. It improves their lives by providing information, advice, support and by campaigning for change.