



Blue Hills Counseling & Consultation, LLC
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Nutrition Education

Part 1

Mood disorders can develop from chronic stress and systemic inflammation. Ultimately, the source of inflammation is traced back to diet. Making changes to the food you consume has been proven to improve both physical and mental well-being. The best foods to start with, if you don't already consume them, are **healthy fats** to lubricate and nourish the brain, **green and orange vegetables** to stabilize blood sugar, and **blue/red fruits** to reduce inflammation. Below are a few examples of foods that support our mental well-being and brains.

Organic Beef, Lamb, Chicken and Pinto Beans

These types of proteins are rich in amino acids which support brain function and mood stability. Pinto beans are rich in B vitamins (especially B-6), which, together with amino acids, support a healthy mood.

Eggs

Eggs are the ideal protein for brain and memory function. They are also proven to enhance growth in children and support adults with high performance activity. Eat two organic farm eggs a day.

Olive Oil, Butter (raw, unsalted) and Coconut Fat

These good fats are medicinal for the brain and mood. Coconut fat is considered a dementia preventative and is very easily digested.

Salmon or Tuna (fresh wild, wild canned)

These fish are rich in omega 3's, which help support the brain and ease pain. Eat only wild varieties.

Fermented Foods

Fermented foods support intestinal health, enhance healthy bacteria, and promote relaxing (GABA) neurotransmitters for brain health.

Sweet Potatoes and Parsnips

These healthy mood stabilizers make an ideal meal for a sweet tooth, and also reduce inflammation. Bake to bring out the flavor and top with butter and sea salt.

Blueberries and Raspberries

Buy fresh or frozen, and enjoy the blue and red antioxidants that reduce pain and help brain function.

Lemons



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Just smelling a lemon increases a sense of well-being. When feeling low in energy, cut open a lemon, sniff and then squeeze the juice into a couple tablespoons of olive oil. Add garlic and dill and pour over fresh vegetable for a delicious snack or side dish.

Oats

One of the most important anti-anxiety foods, oats are best eaten in the evening because they are so relaxing. Add nuts and raisins or use them in baking.

Green Tea

Green tea is rich in theanine, a relaxing amino acid. It can be served in hot or cold tea, as a concentrate, or added to smoothies to boost the mood while staying calm.

Coffee

Boosts mood and helps focus and productivity but be careful. Too much coffee causes anxiety and insomnia. Everyone benefits from a different amount of coffee.

Beets

One of the best foods for digestion, gallbladder health, and detoxification. Steam them or grate them on top of a salad.

Basil

These green leaves are a natural anti-inflammatory and mood lifter. It grows easily in a warm kitchen window where you can pick fresh leaves. Make pesto out of fresh basil and use it to top vegetables, fish or brown rice. Some people crush basil and mix it with lard and apply it topically to a bruise.

Figs

Figs are rich in calcium, magnesium, fiber and Vitamin K. Figs, fresh and dried, should be a staple of your diet to maintain healthy blood sugar, satiety and an elevated mood.

Bitter Greens (Arugula, Dandelion, Watercress, Parsley)

Bitter greens are used to keep the liver and gallbladder healthy, which in turn is essential for reducing anger and depression.

Turmeric

Turmeric contains curcumin, which is a potent anti-depressant and anti-inflammatory. Depression and chronic pain often co-occur. Buy it as a rhizome or in powder form at the local grocery. It's the main ingredient in curry and can be added to vegetables, chicken and meat. Always use freshly ground black pepper in recipes using turmeric, as it is necessary for the absorption of the curcumin. It may also be added to a smoothie.

Garlic



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Garlic has many benefits for heart health, but a little-known benefit is that it helps detoxify the liver and aids in the methylation process, necessary for good mental health.

Ginger

Use ginger in stir fries or add to soups. Or try blending a small piece in your next citrus smoothie to kick your angry mood. It stimulates and cleanses the liver, which is where according to Traditional Chinese Medicine anger lives.

Sea Salt

Sea salt is rich in minerals which support adrenal function, thus making it an important addition to a stress-reduction diet. Eliminate table salt, and experiment with pink and gray salts from different shores around the world.

Best Anxiety-Decreasing Foods

Decreasing and managing anxiety is about eliminating stimulating foods and substances, increasing GABA (a neurotransmitter) precursor foods, and ensuring that there's plenty of acidifying food in your diet, like vinegars and animal protein. Among the best foods for anxiety are bananas, figs, vinegar, and oats. Contrary to popular custom, oats are better eaten later in the day, because they are so relaxing.

Best Fats for Mental Health

Good fats are essential to mental health, and bad fats will contribute to poor mental health. The brain is mostly fat and needs plenty of fat to function. Good fats are a source of energy, satiety, and are anti-inflammatory. Bad fats, or fake fats, clog the arteries and cause pain and inflammation, leading to depression and memory/learning problems. It's a myth that fats (especially saturated fats) are bad for your health. That has been disproven. In fact, without saturated fats, you cannot absorb essential vitamins like A, D, E, and K. The best step you can make is to throw out all the bad fats and bring in the good ones.

Fats and greens go together. Therefore, putting a healthy dollop of raw butter on your steamed greens and topping it with sea salt is a perfect way to improve mood and mental stamina.

TIP: Need help digesting fats? Bitter greens like watercress, arugula, and dandelion are the best foods to eat with a high fat meal. Always choose organic and/or cold pressed oils; otherwise, they are bad fats. Limit the times you eat out because most places use bad fats. NEVER eat deep fat fried food in a restaurant.

Focus on using the following fats:

Butter

The best, most nutritious and medicinal butter is raw. Butter is medicine and the brain needs cholesterol. Splurge for raw butter since your food is your medicine. The Wulzen factor, which prevents and decreases arthritis, joint stiffness, and pain, is found only in raw butter and raw cream. Butter



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should be used on top of grains, vegetables or proteins; make sure not to cook it at high temperatures. Do not worry about cholesterol! Your body takes care of that on its own.

Ghee

Ghee is clarified butter. It is an ideal fat for people who are lactose intolerant because all the milk proteins have been removed. Because it has a high smoke point, you can cook with it, unlike butter, which burns.

Coconut Oil

Use coconut oil for cooking or add to smoothies and baked goods. Coconut oil is a medium chain fatty acid. It is very easily digested, considered healing for the brain, and can aid memory. You can also use it as a moisturizer by rubbing it on dry skin.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (cold pressed)

Olive oil should be a deep green color and bought and stored only in a dark bottle or can, away from light. It is ideal for salad dressings, less so for high heats since olive oil has a low smoke point and the chlorophyll degrades in heat. It can be combined with butter and drizzled over steamed or baked vegetables.

Flax Seed Oil

Add ¼ cup of organic flax seed oil to your olive oil-based salad dressing to gain the benefits of essential fatty acids. Flax seed oil requires refrigeration. It is never heated or used in cooking.

Sesame Oil (toasted and raw)

Long revered in Ayurvedic medicine as a healing oil, sesame is very versatile. Toasted, it adds depth of flavor to vegetable stir-frys and raw, it makes a nice, light dressing.

TIP: Swishing two tablespoons of raw sesame oil in your mouth before bed (no rinsing) is an ancient Ayurvedic remedy for gum problems. Gum problems can be associated with heart disease, which in turn can be associated with dementia. So, swish that oil every night and avoid gum surgery.

Best Foods for Focus

The key to focus and attention is plenty of protein, good fats, vegetable or fruit carbohydrates and minimal starchy carbs like wheat--in that order! Most of us need energy beginning in the morning that will last all day. The very best foods to support attention, focus, and memory are eggs, cocoa (no refined sugar!), nut butters, and apples. Small meals or snacks every 3 -4 hours will help as well. True attention is supported with gently stimulating foods, but overuse and over-stimulation can lead to exhaustion. Don't overdo these foods and herbs. This list of naturally energizing and stimulating herbs and plants can easily be incorporated into your daily diet:

Chocolate/Cocoa



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Chocolate is the “Food of the Gods” for good reason: it’s divine! Without sugar, it is anti-inflammatory and high in polyphenols; however, with sugar, the benefits are destroyed. Cocoa increases circulation and blood vessel growth, improves blood flow to the brain, and supports cognitive function and memory. Cocoa lifts mood and stimulates healthy bacteria in the gut. Limit cocoa use to 1-2 cups a day and sweeten with stevia. Licorice Root Make a cup of tea with licorice root. It is sweet, energizing, and detoxifying. Use it when feeling tired or if coming down with a cold. Don’t drink too much if you have high blood pressure.

Rhodiola

Rhodiola reduces fatigue and improves physical performance and mental focus. It helps you cope with stress, and it makes a perfect afternoon “pick-me-up.” Use it as a substitute for coffee since it increases dopamine and lifts mood. Too much, however, will make you jittery just like coffee.

Ginseng

This important Chinese herb is a gentle stimulant and helps to reduce stress. It improves memory, concentration, and focus. Fresh or dried ginseng root is usually boiled and made into a tea.

Schizandra

This superfood is a berry, and is sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and pungent. It enhances mood and improves the ability to memorize and learn new information. Schizandra can be found as dried berries or in supplements.

Maca

This is a root that belongs to the broccoli family and originated in the Andes. It is energizing and increases exercise and work endurance. Maca usually comes in a powder form and can be added to smoothies for an extra boost.