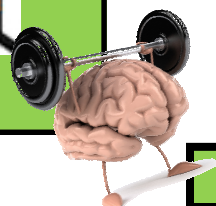




The Informed Worker



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MENTAL FITNESS– FIVE FOODS FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

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Sadly, the genetic and environmental influences passed down by our ancestors, though far from perfect, were likely better than the ones we're passing on to future generations. An emerging body of research is showing that the way we eat today not only affects our own health but also that of our children and grandchildren.

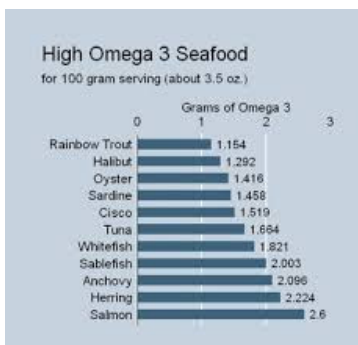
Nutrition is a key contributor to good mental health, but it's just one piece of the puzzle. Dietary changes won't be sufficient for everyone and are not a substitute for other forms of treatment. If you're struggling with symptoms of a mental health disorder, talk to a therapist or your family physician.

made up largely of fat and our bodies cannot manufacture essential fatty acids, we have to rely on a diet rich in omega-3s to meet our daily needs.

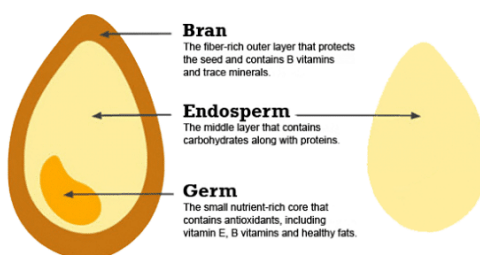
In studies, foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as wild cold water fish (e.g., salmon, herring, sardines and mackerel), seaweed, chicken fed on flaxseed and walnuts, have been shown to reduce symptoms of schizophrenia, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and other mental disorders. This is likely because of the effect omega-3s have on the production of neurotransmitters (brain chemicals responsible for our moods), including dopamine and serotonin. By supporting the synapses in the brain, omega-3s also boost learning and memory.

1 Fatty Fish

The Standard American Diet is sorely deficient in omega-3 fatty acids, such as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and high in trans fats and saturated fats which have been shown to negatively affect the brain. Since our brains are



Whole Grain vs. "White" Grain



#2 Whole Grains

The primary source of energy for the brain is glucose, which comes from carbohydrates. Simple carbohydrates exacerbate low mood by creating spikes in blood sugar and have been shown to have effects on the brain similar to drugs of abuse. By contrast, complex carbs release glucose slowly, helping us feel full longer and providing a steady source of fuel for the brain and body. Healthy sources of complex carbohydrates include whole-wheat products, bulgur, oats, wild rice, barley, beans and soy.

#3 Lean Protein

The foods we eat are broken down into substances that are used to make neurotransmitters and other chemicals that allow different parts of the nervous system to communicate effectively with each other and the rest of the body. Next to carbohydrates, protein is the most abundant substance in the body. The amino acid tryptophan, a building block of protein, influences mood by producing the neurotransmitter serotonin.

Sometimes called nature's Prozac, serotonin is associated with depression. Lean protein sources, including fish, turkey, chicken, eggs and beans, help keep serotonin levels balanced. Even more important are complex carbohydrates, which actually facilitate the entry of tryptophan into the brain, reducing the symptoms of depression and anxiety and improving overall cognitive functioning.

Kimkins Lean Protein Comparison

QTY	PROTEIN	CALORIES	FAT GRAMS	FAT %	
4 boiled	egg, whites only	68	0	0	VERY LEAN
4 oz cooked	turkey, ground breast	120	1	11	
4 oz cooked	fish, tilapia or trout	145	3	19	
4 oz cooked	venison, roasted	215	5	19	
4 oz cooked	chicken, breast, no skin	170	4	20	
4 oz cooked	tuna, canned in water	145	3	21	
4 oz cooked	fish, salmon	164	5	27	MEDIUM LEAN
4 oz cooked	beef, 95% lean ground	140	5	35	
4 oz cooked	tuna, canned in oil	225	9	37	
4 oz cooked	chicken, leg, no skin	189	8	40	
4 oz cooked	pork, sparerib, no fat eaten	205	9	40	
4 oz cooked	beef, porterhouse steak	220	10	41	
4 oz cooked	beef, chuck roast	286	15	47	
4 oz cooked	turkey, ground regular	261	15	50	
4 oz cooked	beef, prime rib	321	21	58	NOT LEAN
4 oz cooked	beef, ground 80% lean	309	21	61	
2 boiled	egg, whole	155	11	62	
4 oz cooked	lamb, ground	321	22	63	
1 broiled	chicken, wing skin eaten	98	7	64	
3 strips	bacon, turkey, cooked crisp	126	9	64	
3 strips	bacon, pork, cooked crisp	130	10	69	
4 oz cooked	sausage, kielbasa smoked	253	20	70	
4 oz cooked	sausage, pork ground	380	32	75	

#4 Leafy Greens

Popeye was on to something with a diet high in spinach. Leafy greens such as spinach, romaine, turnip and mustard greens, and broccoli are high in folic acid, as are beets and lentils. Deficiencies in folate as well as other B vitamins have been linked with higher rates of depression, fatigue and insomnia.

Broccoli also contains selenium, a trace mineral that plays an important role in our immune system functioning, reproduction and thyroid hormone metabolism. Some studies suggest that low levels of selenium contribute to depression, anxiety and fatigue. Other sources of selenium include chicken, onions, seafood, walnuts and brazil nuts, and whole-grain products.

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#5 Yogurt with Active Cultures

Fermented foods, such as yogurt with active cultures, kefir, kimchi, tempeh and certain pickled vegetables, contain probiotics (healthy bacteria) which have been shown in studies to reduce anxiety and stress hormones and effect the neurotransmitter GABA. By contrast, eating too many processed foods may compromise the delicate balance of healthy and unhealthy bacteria in the gut.

Today's Choices Affect Tomorrow's Welfare

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Mental Health Helpline

1-866-531-2600

The first place to start for help.

The Mental Health Helpline provides information about mental health services in Ontario. We are funded by the Government of Ontario. Information is the first step. A helpful Information and Referral Specialist will answer your call, email or web chat 24/7. Our service is free and confidential