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**Tips to Help Boost Mood from Food**

1. **Eat Breakfast**
* Eating breakfast turns on your metabolism and prepares your body for the day
* Many studies have demonstrated eating breakfast leads to improved concentration, academic performance, emotional regulation and body composition
* **TIP**: Have a balanced breakfast including: a whole grain, protein, fruit and glass of milk
1. **Eat 3 Balanced Meals at Regular Times, with small snacks as needed**
* Eating at regular intervals helps to keep blood sugars stable preventing fatigue, decreases in blood sugar and cravings for sweet foods
* **TIP**: Space your breakfast, lunch and supper 4-6 hours apart; if you need, have a small snack in between consisting of 1 carbohydrate and 1 protein
1. **Choose Healthy Carbohydrates**
* Choose healthy carbohydrates rather than convenience foods
* These foods are the main fuel source for your brain
* Healthy Carbohydrates increase your brains production of serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter that allows us to feel calm & relaxed
* **TIP**: include foods such as whole grains (oatmeal, barley, brown rice), root vegetables, fruits, legumes in your diet, and make this the main focus of your meal
1. **Include Foods that May Boost Serotonin Production**
* These foods may, by different mechanisms, boost serotonin production in your body
* **TIP**: Try some of these:
	+ **Omega-3 fats** – fish and seafood
	+ **Fermented foods** such as yogurt and sauerkraut
	+ **Foods containing B6** – poultry, salmon, nuts, seeds, bananas, avocados or a B-complex or multivitamin
	+ **Vitamin D** – fish, eggs, milk and a Vitamin D supplement
	+ **Vitamin B12**-found in animal products
1. **Modified Mediterranean Diet**
* Research suggests following a Modified Mediterranean style diet which is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and healthy fats from fish & oils and small amount of red meat are less likely to suffer from depression; Omega 3 fats, iron and B vitamins are prominent in this diet
* **Tip**: rather than focusing on specific foods or nutrients, make healthy choices at all meals and follow a Mediterranean style eating pattern
1. **Consider other nutrients**
* When you don’t eat enough nutrient-rich food, your body may lack essential vitamins/minerals which may affect your energy, mood and brain function
* **Vitamin C foods –** Boosts immunity and help produce stress reducing hormones
	+ Citrus fruit, strawberries, peppers
* **Iron**- Too little may cause us to feel weak & tired
	+ Poultry, fish, red meat, cooked spinach, nuts, dried fruit
* **Selenium**– Too little may increase the incidence of negative mood states
	+ Brazil nuts, meat, fish/seafood, seeds, whole grain bread, oatmeal, brown rice, beans & legumes
* **Folate**-Indirectly helps to make neurotransmitters
	+ Leafy greens, legumes, nuts/seeds, whole grains
1. **Caffeine, Water & Hydration**
	* + Excess intake of caffeine via coffee & pop can leave little room for nutritious foods at meals, may contribute to insomnia, and may worsen symptoms of depression/anxiety in those that are sensitive to caffeine
		+ The aging process alters important physiological control systems associated with thirst. With mild dehydration, we may have a dry/sticky mouth, feel tired/sleepy, dizziness or have a headache.
		+ Tip: Don’t exceed more than 3 cups of coffee/day, and stay hydrated with water. You could also try eliminating caffeine slowly for a month or so and observe the effect on your sleep & your mood.
2. **Limit alcohol**
	* + Studies on alcohol consumption in humans and animals have found lower serotonin levels in the brain of those that consume larger quantities compared to lose that consume alcohol less frequently
		+ **Tip:** Don’t use alcohol to assist with relaxation. If you choose to drink follow suggested guidelines: no more than 1 standard drink/day for a woman and 2 standard drinks for a man

 Adapted with permission 2018