

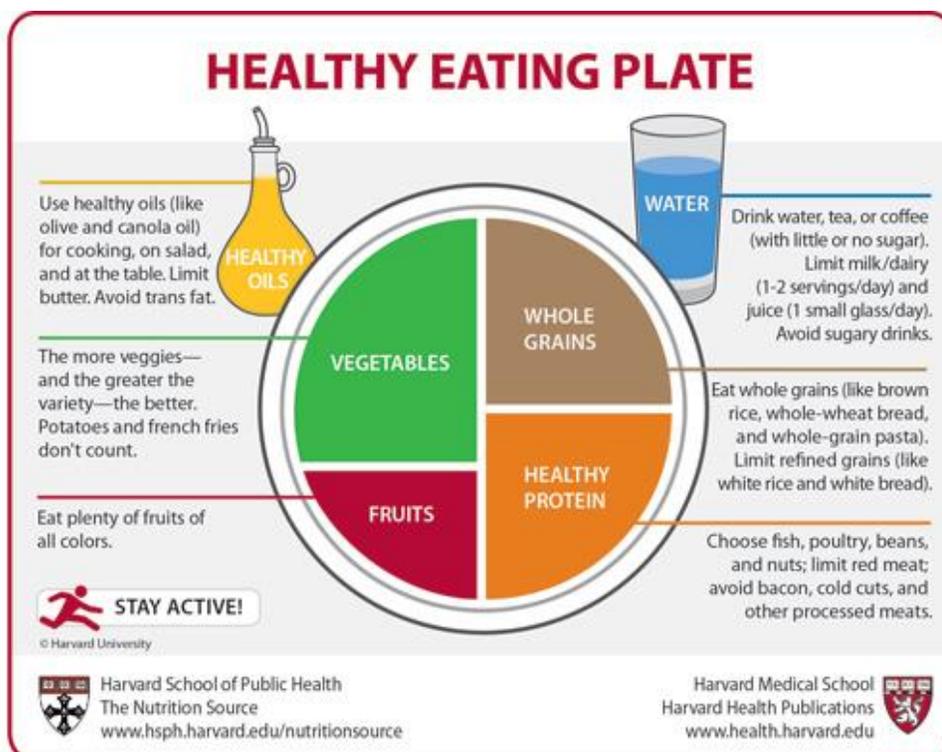
# THE FOOD MOOD CONNECTION

## TIPS TO BOOST YOUR MOOD

### Healthy Eating to Improve Mood

- **Regular meal times and snacks:** Start with breakfast and eat 1-2 hours after waking up. Space meals every 4-5 hours and add snacks as needed. Eating consistently during the day can stabilize blood sugar to keep you feeling energetic.
- **Cut back on added sugars:** Added sugars from candy, soda, juice, desserts, and other sweets cause your blood sugar to spike rapidly and then drop quickly, much like a roller coaster. The recommendation for added sugars are 6 teaspoons or 100 calories per day for women, and 9 teaspoons or 150 calories for men.
- **Eat high fiber carbohydrates:** Carbohydrate foods raise serotonin levels in the brain which may help enhance mood and give you energy. Choose whole grains cereals, breads, pasta, beans, lentils, oats and brown rice as they contain fiber to help maintain your energy.
- **Focus on proteins at meals and snacks:** Lean proteins contain tryptophan which helps production of serotonin. Protein also slows digestion of carbohydrates which stabilizes blood sugar and keeps you fuller longer. Good protein foods include poultry, seafood, lean beef and pork, eggs, dairy, tofu, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds.
- **Choose healthy fats:** Unsaturated fats and omega 3 fatty acids may boost mood, memory, and help treat depression. Choose olive oil, avocados, nuts, flaxseed, fatty fish such as salmon, tuna.

**Putting it all together with Mediterranean Diet:** This is a balanced way of eating that includes plenty of fruits, nuts, vegetables, cereals, legumes, and fish -- all of which are important sources of nutrients linked to aiding depression.



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### Key Nutrients:

- **Include vitamin D:** Vitamin D aids in the production of serotonin. Research has associated vitamin D deficiency with increased risk of depression in older adults. It can also help with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Food sources include egg yolks, oily fish such as sardines, salmon, and mackerel, and fortified foods such as milk, cereals and orange juice. Check with your provider to see if a vitamin D supplement is recommended.
- **Get plenty of B vitamins:** Several B vitamins including B12, B6, and folic acid/folate have been linked to supporting brain health. Vitamin B6 is also a popular cure for treating PMS symptoms. Food sources include beef, milk, eggs, cottage cheese clams, crab, halibut, tuna, and oysters, citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables, whole grains, lentils, and oats.
- **Select Selenium Foods:** Selenium is a mineral in your body that can help with depression and mood. Foods with selenium include whole grains, beans, lean meat, dairy, nuts, seeds and seafood.
- **Make room for Magnesium:** Magnesium is a mineral that stabilizes blood sugar, relaxes nerves and muscles and helps with circulation. Food sources to add to your meal plan are: whole grains, dark greens, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy, chocolate, and fruits such as bananas, berries and avocado.

### Additional Considerations:

**Watch caffeine intake:** Up to 400 mg of caffeine per day is considered safe for most healthy adults.

Sources of caffeine include:

- Coffee - 100 mg per 8 oz cup
- Tea - 14 mg to 60 mg per 8 oz cup
- Chocolate - 45 mg in 1.5 oz. bar
- Most sodas (unless labeled caffeine-free) - 45 mg in 12 oz. drink

Consider stopping caffeine intake 6 hours before bed to prevent it from affecting sleep.

**Limit alcohol:** The immediate effect of alcohol may be relaxing. Yet as alcohol is processed by your body, it can make you more emotional. Alcohol can also interfere with sleep. Limit to one drink per day for women and 2 days per day for men. A drink is considered a 5 ounce glass of wine, 12 beer, or 1 ounce hard liquor.

**Manage Stress:** We often crave sugar when stressed since it raises serotonin levels. Reach for high fiber carbohydrates such as oatmeal instead when you feel stress. Better yet, try relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing to help cope.

**Physical Activity:** Those who exercise regularly benefit with a positive boost in mood and lower rates of depression. Get moving for at least 30 minutes every day. Focus on physical activity you can do rather than what you can't do (walking, swimming, biking).

**Probiotics:** Probiotics or "good gut bacteria" support digestive and immune system health. New research is exploring the link between probiotics and mental health. Probiotics can be found in fermented foods including yogurts, kefir, kimchi, kombucha, and sauerkraut.