

GET IN THE MOOD WITH YOUR FOOD

Eating the right food can help to pick you up if you're feeling rough, and even prevent you from becoming ill. A healthy, balanced diet is one of the basic foundations of general well being, and should protect you from nutritional deficiencies that can leave you feeling irritable, washed out, or really down.

BRAIN BOOSTING FOODS- feeling lethargic? Can't remember where you left the car keys or the dog? Then try and include a few of these foods into your regular diet.

- **WHOLE GRAIN CEREALS-** this is basically anything that is brown- brown rice, wholegrain bread and so on. Packed full of B vitamins, wholegrain cereals are a great tonic to the brain. The fibre in them will also help regulate your blood sugar levels and will ensure a more consistent source of energy
- **OILY FISH-** ever heard about fish being good for the brain? Well we now know this is true due to the presence of the omega-3 fatty acids- a wonderful tonic for both the nervous system and brain function. Best fish to include are salmon, tuna, mackerel – or why not try good old sardines on toast- very good!
- **FRUITS-** Eating the whole fruit rather than just the juice is much better for the brain. Pure fruit juice will cause your blood sugar levels to rise immediately after drinking and then normally the sugar levels will slump one- two hours afterwards. The fibre in the whole fruit slows this process down.... And the best fruit to eat for balanced brain blood sugars- apples, cherries, oranges and grapes- they all have a low GI.
- **PULSES –** Not the ones in your wrists, but the ones that you eat! But there is another form of pulse- foods such as lentils, soybeans and chickpeas and they are a great way of ensuring the brain has adequate and sustainable blood sugar levels. Have them in your favourite curry, as a stirry fry, a wonderful lentil lasagne(you wouldn't believe there is no meat in it!) or dahl. Use the tinned varieties- they are just as good as starting from scratch and are a great alternative to meat, chicken & fish.
- **PROTEINS –** there are two important amino acids that we gain when we eat protein foods such as low fat dairy and red meat- these are tyrosine & tryptophan. They are required by the body to help produce the feel good hormones serotonin, dopamine and adrenalin. Prozac works by producing more serotonin in the body- the same effect we get when we eat carbohydrate rich foods . Could you be self medicating with that extra piece of cake?

EATING TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD

Eat slowly and chew every mouthful

Stop before your full

Eat with people you love- or at best enjoy being with

Smile after completing a meal- you'll double the endorphins

Have healthy snacks such as nuts, low fat cheese, and tuna on wholemeal crackers to maintain blood sugar levels, in between meals

If you're upset- go for a walk, have a cry or get a hug before you sit down to eat. Your digestion will love you for it.

- Regardless , including more low fat dairy , especially in the form of yoghurt will provide the body with lots of tyrosine and tryptophan which has to be a good thing! Not into yoghurt? Then try dark chocolate, almonds or lentils- all have a similar effect.
- **STRAWBERRIES, CAPSICUMS, PARSLEY AND GRAPEFRUIT**- all of these are high in Vitamin C which is important to help the body produce more serotonin and dopamine for the body. Vitamin C will also assist with your energy levels- so make sure you include these wonderful foods in your diet everyday.
- **GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES**- Popeye wasn't kidding when he ate a tin or two of spinach everyday. Packed full of iron, which is really important for your energy and ability for your body to carry oxygen- low oxygen levels makes us drowsy and tired. Make a wonderful salad with english spinach, parsley, your favourite salad greens, some fresh nasturtium leaves and flowers (washed carefully) , pumpkin seeds with a light olive oil and lemon dressing- brain food in the making. Toss in some fresh avocado and the good oils will also help lift moods and feed the brain.
- **OATS**- these are a wonderful tonic for the body. Take as porridge (watch the instant varieties which have a lot of the goodness taken out) , muesli or soak in an oats milk bath to soothe those frazzled nerves.

HAPPY FOODS – Foods such as dark chocolate, milk, bananas and chicken all boost the body's own natural endorphin levels and assist in lifting your moods.

SNOOZE FOODS – the best foods to help you calm and snooze are dairy products such as cottage cheese, low fat milk, chicken, hazlenuts, whole grains, rice and hummous.

SAD FOODS – everyone's moods can be affected differently by the food they eat. However for many people, a meal that is high in white sugar and flour products can lead to feelings of sadness and lethargy, one – two hours after eating. Best not to have just before bedtime.

DEPRESSING FOODS – watch your intake of caffeine loaded foods- coffee & milk chocolate as well as too much alcohol which will definitely depress your mood.

HAPPY EATING !!

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About Shirley:

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