

Good Mood Foods



Did you know that bananas contain a secret mood boosting ingredient, or that too much sugar can have a depressive effect? Just a few simple changes in your diet can help lift mood and help reduce anxiety.

In Vital Nutrition's Good Mood Foods workshop, you will discover how simple dietary changes can help support your mental and emotional wellbeing.

Stay healthy, Jane

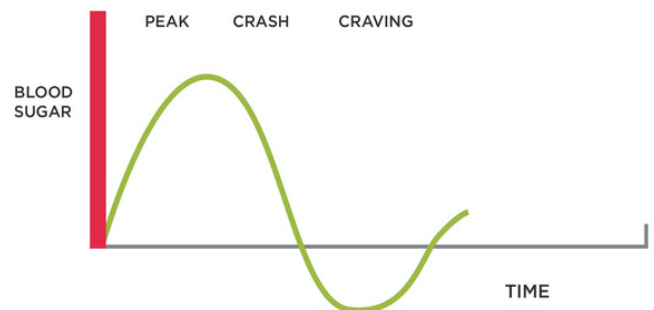
Ten Ways to Boost Mood...

1. Beat the sugar blues

One of the most common causes of low mood is low blood sugar levels. If you are gaining weight, crave sugars and feel tired a lot, the chances are your blood sugar is out of kilter.

Here are 3 simple rules to balance your blood sugar levels:

1. Cut back on your sugar intake
2. Have some protein with every meal and snack
3. Eat higher fibre foods to balance blood sugar and keep fuller for longer



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2. Eat more good fat

Neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin rely on a daily supply of good fats in our diet. So eat enough fat!

- Eat oily fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, trout or sardines 2-3 x week or take a fish oil supplement (check with your GP if you are on medication)
- Have a handful of unsalted & unroasted nuts or seeds every day
- Eat avocados regularly
- Cook with olive or coconut oil
- Use olive oil for dressings and drizzles

3. Eat more vegetables

Vegetables should form the cornerstone of a healthy diet. Packed with essential nutrients and antioxidants they provide some of the most important nutrients in our diets. One study showed a 20% improvement in positive mood when people ate 7 or 8 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

- Eat dark green leafy vegetables every day. These contain magnesium and folic acid which may help support mood
- Snack on raw veg sticks like carrots, peppers, sugar snap peas or celery
- Choose lower sugar fruit like berries, cherries, kiwi, apple, pears, plums and watermelon
- Use fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables. Check out frozen berries as they are often cheaper than the fresh versions
- Pack veggies into any dish – bulk out your bolognese with peppers, onions, leeks and courgettes, give curries a boost with cauliflower and spinach and try spiralising anything from apples to zucchinis!



4. Eat some feel good foods

The amino acids tryptophan and tyrosine are precursors for serotonin and dopamine. Serotonin keeps us cool, calm and collected, while dopamine gives us our get up and go.

Serotonin	Dopamine
Calm, relaxed & happy	Motivated and enough get up & go
Low levels = low mood	Low levels = low energy, poor motivation
Crave carbohydrate, dairy or bananas when low serotonin	Crave caffeine and stimulants when low dopamine
Can't sleep when deficient	Can't get out of bed in the mornings when deficient
Made from tryptophan found in oats, milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, sesame seeds, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, bananas, and peanuts	Made from tyrosine found in almonds, avocados, bananas, dairy products, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds

5. Rethink your drinks

Tea, coffee, sugary drinks and alcohol can all contribute to mood imbalances. Aim to reduce your intake. Herbal teas instead of tea, Barleycup or Caro instead of coffee and kombucha in place of fizzy drinks or alcohol are good ideas.

Did you know? ... Green tea contains L-theanine, which has been associated with changes in alpha brain waves said to promote relaxation.

6. Focus on B vitamins

B vitamins help turn the protein you eat into neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. The most important are B6, B12 and folic acid. Some people find taking a B complex helps with mood and anxiety.

B6 – Poultry, fish, whole grains (e.g. oats, brown rice), eggs, vegetables, peanuts, milk

B12 – Meat, salmon, cod, milk, cheese, eggs

Folic acid – Dark green leafy veg like broccoli, spinach and brussel sprouts, liver, asparagus, peas, chickpeas

7. Are you deficient in vitamin D?

Do you feel low during winter months? Between October and March most of us do not get enough sun exposure – this could be why you feel blue during winter months.

It may be beneficial to take a vitamin D supplement during our darker months to keep vitamin D levels topped up. Aim for around 2000iu between October and May.

Vital Nutrition pinprick blood test for vitamin D costs £30 (ask us about this, or email info@vital-nutrition.co.uk for further details).

8. Get a good night's sleep

Sometimes we need a little helping hand to get a good night's sleep, Try some of these ideas to help you snooze soundly without counting sheep.

- Have a relaxing bedtime routine and start to wind down a few hours before bedtime. Read a book, have a bath or listen to some relaxing music.
- Switch off tablets, TVs and laptops at least an hour before bedtime, as the light from these devices can interfere with sleep.



- A small snack at supper time containing nutrients like magnesium and tryptophan may help you to sleep better. Eat at least an hour before you go to bed and try one of these options:

- 2 oatcakes & almond nut butter
- A small banana
- Natural yoghurt & berries
- A handful of almonds

- Make your bedroom a relaxing place and never watch TV in the bedroom.
- Cut out caffeine from about 5pm. Caffeine can take several hours to clear from your system, so drink herbal teas instead.
- Keep your bedtime regular and go to bed before midnight.

9. Exercise outdoors

In studies, exercise has been shown to be as effective as anti-depressants for mood. Exercise outside to get the benefit of sun exposure. Being in nature often helps get your mind in a better state. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise every day to get the endorphins flowing.

10. Take time out

Relaxation and meditation help support mental wellness.

We all have different things that help us to switch off. Some people like yoga & tai chi, while others prefer to read a book. Find something that you enjoy and that helps take your mind off the busyness of daily life.

Try mindfulness based relaxation exercises.

Have a look at www.getsomeheadspace.com for details.

You can stay in touch with Vital Nutrition on Facebook, Instagram or online for news, views and regular recipe updates.

