

Food & Mood

Can the foods I eat change the way I feel?

We all have foods we like eating and foods that we enjoy less but does what we eat affect our emotions and how we feel. This sheet will give you a quick summary of the nutritional reasons for food affecting how you feel. There are also lots of other reasons that food can affect our mood, such as treat foods giving us a smile!



Vitamins and minerals:

Sometimes we lack vital vitamins and minerals this can happen for lots of different reasons like if our diet has not been varied enough. Take a look at the table below.

Low vitamin/ mineral	Effect on mood	Foods that can help
Iron	Iron deficiency often makes you feel weak and tired	Red meat, poultry, fish, beans, pulses and fortified cereals Avoid drinking tea with meals as this can stop your body taking up iron.
B-Vitamins	Can cause you to feel tired, depressed or irritable	Fortified and wholegrain cereals, meat/ fish, eggs and dairy
Folate	Lack of folate can make you feel depressed	Liver, green vegetables, oranges, citrus fruits, beans, marmite and fortified breakfast cereals
Selenium	Not having enough selenium can cause you to feel depressed or down	Brazil nuts, meat, fish, seeds and wholemeal bread.



Brain food

The brain needs lots of energy to function properly, the body also needs energy to keep us warm and our muscles moving. When we are hungry or haven't eaten in a while we can feel weak, grumpy and not at our best. We can try to avoid this by regularly eating patterns and including carbohydrate foods such as a whole meal bread or oats.



Comfort eating

There is a chemical in the brain called serotonin which is released when we are happy or in a good mood. Serotonin is made from protein and released when we eat carbohydrates. Some experts believe that not having enough carbohydrates can lead to low mood although this is not yet proven. If you are feeling low try to eat your normal amount of food and include all the different food groups and not only carbohydrates!

Summary:

Diet and what we eat can have a huge affect on the way we feel. We should be aiming to have a regular meal times and to try and include a healthy carbohydrates, protein, lots of fruit and vegetables and some fat too. Eat a varied with lots of different foods can help us make sure we have enough vitamins and minerals. If you are worried that you aren't getting enough speak to your doctor or dietitian.