

Improve mood and reduce stress

food mood & memory

Improve memory and cognition

Nourishing foods for your mental health

Nutrition plays a key role in our mental wellbeing. Whether it is what we are eating or simply having enough to eat, how we nourish our body is impactful

Some foods that **support the brain:**

chia seeds: These small seeds are a good plant-based source of omega-3! **Omega-3 fatty acids** are a major **building block of the brain** and have **anti-inflammatory benefits**. Omega-3 is an essential fatty acid, meaning we need to get it through the food we eat in the form of EPA, DHA, or ALA. In the human diet, EPA and DHA are almost exclusively found in fatty fish. Plant sources, like chia seeds, contain ALA which the body can use to make EPA and DHA. Other good sources of omega-3 include salmon, mackerel, herring, oysters, sardines and anchovies, walnuts, soybeans, and flax seeds.

greek yogurt: This tasty dairy option is packed full of **protein** and also **vitamin B12**. B12 is needed for your body to produce the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine! **Serotonin** is linked to happiness, focus and calmness. **Dopamine** plays a role in satisfaction and motivation. Vitamin B12 is found primarily in animal products (fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk/dairy). Plant sources include nutritional yeast (not baker's yeast), fortified breakfast cereals, tempeh and seaweed, however, those who do not eat animal foods may need to supplement to meet adequate amounts.

fermented foods: A happy gut = happy microbiome! Fermented foods contain **gut-healthy bacteria** which can have a positive influence on your **mood**. Having a balanced microbiome is linked improved mental wellness because some gut bacteria help to make mood-boosting neurotransmitters! Sources of fermented foods include yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, tempeh, miso, pickled vegetables, kombucha.

Tips:

Sprinkle nuts and seeds on meals/snacks for extra omega-3 (and also protein!).

Choose options packed in oil, when purchasing canned fish. This helps to preserve the omega-3s naturally found in the fish! Use the extra oil as a base for salad dressing or on top of pasta, pizza, or veggies.

Pair fruits and veggies with a healthy fat! This will help your body better absorb some vitamins and minerals found in produce. It will also keep you feeling full and satisfied.

Use plain yogurt as a base for sauces for added probiotics.

Keep nutrient dense snacks on hand for easy access when hunger strikes! (i.e., snack bags of trail mix or single serve pouches of nut butter + fruit).

Choose a variety of foods across all food groups! This help ensure diversity in micronutrients from your diet.

Enjoying your nourishment is important for maintaining healthy, long-term habits!
Be sure to talk to your doctor or a dietitian before making any significant dietary changes.

FRESH