

# Food and Mood

A self-help guide



Produced by buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service  
in partnership with Manchester Primary Care Mental Health Team.  
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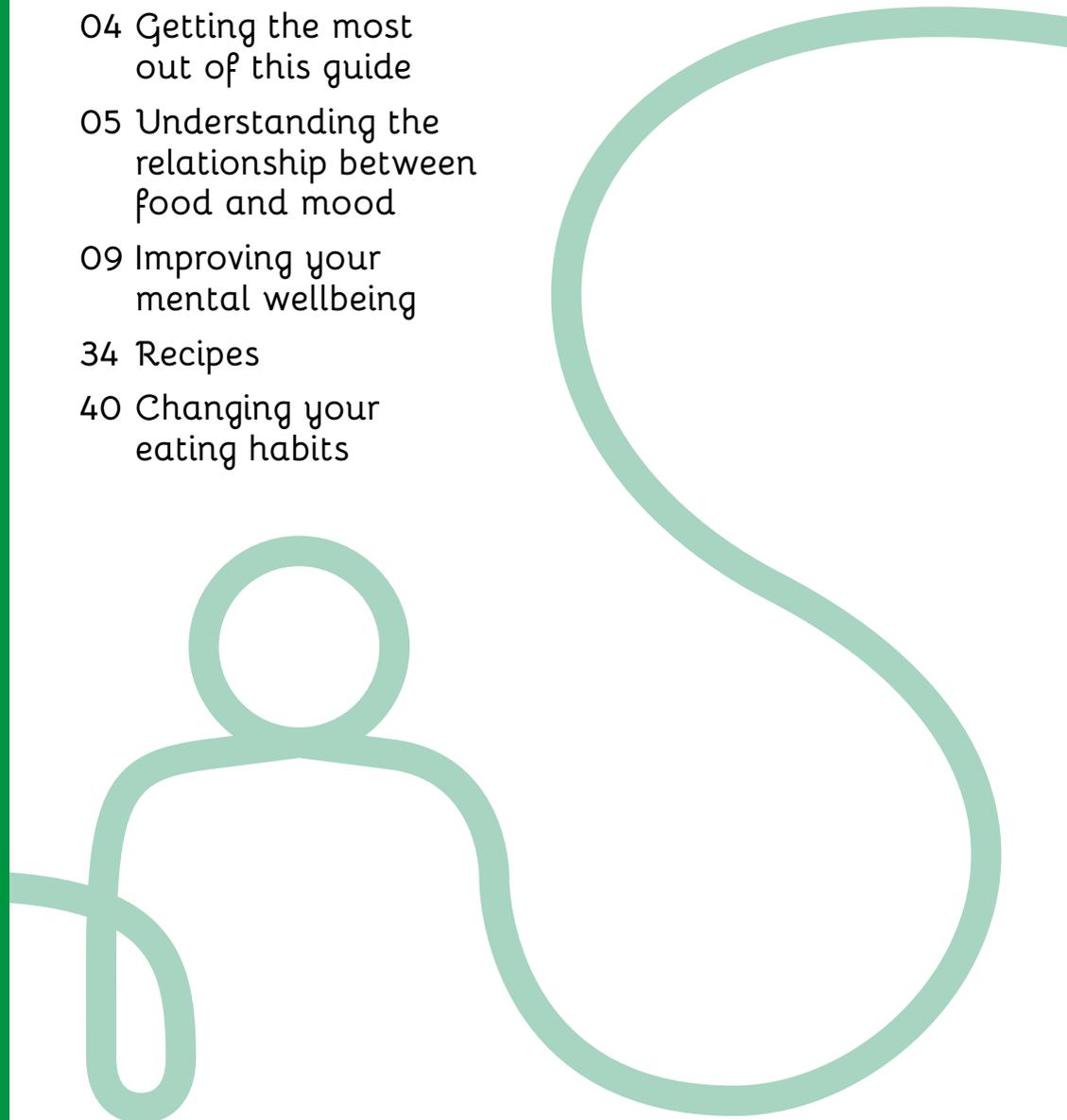
[www.buzzmanchester.co.uk](http://www.buzzmanchester.co.uk)

This guide is one of a series about mental health and wellbeing by buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service. You can find more guides at [www.mhim.org.uk](http://www.mhim.org.uk)

‘Food and Mood’ explains how what you eat and drink can have a big impact on how you feel, your energy levels, your mood and your sleep. Eating well can help reduce symptoms of mental health.

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# Getting the most out of this guide

## This guide aims to:

- Help you understand the different food groups
- Help you to see how eating more of certain foods can help you feel better
- Help you understand how a healthy diet can reduce symptoms of severe and enduring mental health issues
- Help inform your decisions about making healthy food and drink choices

Throughout this guide there will be a number of tools for you to try which aim to help you improve your relationship with food and drink.

If you find it hard to work through the guide, you might find it useful to talk to someone. This could be a health worker such as your doctor or practice nurse. At the end of the guide there are details about where to get more information, help and treatment.

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# Understanding the relationship between food and mood

Research shows that how and what you eat and drink can have a big impact on how you feel on a day to day basis.

How you are feeling, can affect what you put into your body. For example, if you are worried, upset or feeling down you may lose your appetite or have a lack of interest in food. Alternatively you may start to choose foods that are high in sugar or fat and consume larger amounts of food than you need (this is known as comfort eating). Some people might start drinking more alcohol or have more drinks high in caffeine and sugar.

We all go through emotional difficulties from time to time. The important thing is to try and make good decisions when it comes to food and drink, as it can have a huge affect on your mental health.

A healthy diet can boost your mood, give you energy and make you feel good about yourself. Any changes to your diet can be done gradually and even making small changes to start with can add up to big benefits over time.

The recommendations in this guide relate to adults only and were correct at the time of printing. Healthy eating guidelines and the evidence base for food and mood can change. These are general guidelines, those with special dietary requirements or those taking certain medications should consult with their GP or practice nurse before making any changes to their diet. Keep up to date with the latest guidelines at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

# Symptoms checklist

## A healthy diet is closely linked with mental health and wellbeing

Mental health issues can affect many areas of your life; your thoughts, your emotions, your body and your behaviour.

Here is a list of some of the ways it can affect people. Please tick any boxes that apply to your own life.

### You feel...

- Tearful
- Panicky
- Restless
- Aggressive
- Mood swings
- Tired, low in energy
- Anxious, nervous, frightened
- Easily stressed, stressed out
- Depressed, low in mood, 'down'
- Unreal, strange, woozy, detached

### Your mind...

- Can't concentrate
- Negative thoughts
- Can't think straight
- Mind preoccupied by food
- Hearing your own thoughts
- Keep forgetting things
- Imagining the worst and dwelling on it
- Difficulty remembering things

### You might behave by...

- Getting angry at people
- Losing interest in things
- Being snappy and irritable
- Becoming hyperactive or under active
- Eating too much or too little
- Drinking more alcohol
- Eating food high in fat and/or sugar

### Your body symptoms are...

- Bloating
- Cravings
- Headaches
- Dehydration
- Fast heart beat
- Aches and pains
- Raised blood pressure
- Tight and painful chest
- Dizzy, shaking, fainting
- Feeling sick (nauseous)
- Lose your appetite
- Constipation and/or diarrhoea

If you have ticked a number of these boxes, making changes to your diet will help with these symptoms. However, don't be alarmed, this is common. Even if you have most of them, you can start by making small changes. You will find some useful ideas in this guide.

## There are a number of things you can do to help with these symptoms, including:

- Visit your GP for advice
- Refer to the contact list provided at the back of this guide
- Visit your local 'Health Information Point' in a public library
- Make changes to what you eat and drink

“A healthy diet can boost your mood, energy and make you feel good.”

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## Improving your mental wellbeing

There are seven key areas that can help to improve your mood and mental wellbeing through what you eat, drink and put into your body:

- Drinking enough fluid
- Getting enough healthy fats into your diet
- Vitamins and minerals
- Eating enough of the right kind of carbohydrates
- Getting plenty of protein in your diet
- Making time for breakfast every day
- Limiting alcohol consumption

Throughout this guide you will find out more about each of these seven areas in more detail and how you can incorporate them into your daily life to improve your mood and mental wellbeing.

Before we go through the seven areas, a good starting point is to look at what you eat and drink now. Take the test on the next page to help you to see what changes you could make right away to improve your mood.

## Take the test



Tick the box for each food or drink that best describes your eating and drinking habits. The aim is to have less red foods and more of the green foods in your diet.

You can take the test again in a few weeks to see if you have made any changes.

Tick (y) yes, (s) sometimes or (n) no.

y	s	n
---	---	---

### Red foods

Red foods are high in less healthy fats, sugar and caffeine

Sweets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pies or pasties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fried foods e.g. chips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crisps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Butter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sugar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coffee/tea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sugary fizzy drinks e.g. cola, lemonade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sugary drinks e.g. cordials, fruit juice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fatty meat e.g. bacon, sausages and salami	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White bread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baked goods e.g. cakes, biscuits or donuts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Red foods are known to have a negative effect on mental health and wellbeing.

You don't need to stop eating or drinking any of these completely. Instead, you may want to try and cut down on the ones you are eating a lot of.

Tick (y) yes, (s) sometimes or (n) no.

y	s	n
---	---	---

### Green foods

Green foods are high in vitamins, minerals, protein, Omega 3, starch and water

Water and other fluids (excluding alcohol)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegetables e.g. sweetcorn, carrots, peppers and onions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dark green vegetables e.g. broccoli, spinach, cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wholemeal/granary/seeded bread and cereals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rice, potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oily fish e.g. mackerel, sardines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Omega 3 oils e.g. linseed/flax, rapeseed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dairy e.g. milk, yoghurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lean meat and fish e.g. chicken, steak, salmon, cod	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nuts and seeds e.g. pumpkin seeds, almonds and walnuts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beans and pulses e.g. dhals, chickpeas, red kidney beans and lentils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Green foods are known to improve mental health and wellbeing. A healthy diet includes lots of these foods.

Try introducing some of the foods from the green list to see if you like them.

## Frequent fluids

### Water is essential for life. Two thirds of your body is made up of fluid.

The body loses water when you breathe, sweat and go to the toilet. You need to replace lost fluids with about 1.5 to 2 litres (6 to 8 glasses) of water each day to allow your body and brain to work properly.

You need more fluids on a hot day or when exercising. You will become dehydrated if you lose more water than you take in. You can be dehydrated and not feel thirsty, so it can be tricky to know when you need more fluids. Not having enough water and other fluids can make it hard to concentrate. It can cause headaches, tiredness, nausea and constipation.

### We get water from food and drinks, such as:

- Stews
- Soups
- Cucumber
- Melon and similar fruits
- Vegetables
- Sugar-free squash
- Tea
- Coffee

## Urine chart



### How do you know if you are dehydrated?

A good way is by looking at the colour of your urine. Have a look at the different colours and their meanings.

#### No colour, transparent

You're drinking more than enough water. You may want to cut back

#### Pale straw colour

You're drinking enough water. You're well hydrated

#### Light yellow

You're drinking enough water. You're well hydrated

#### Dark yellow

You're okay. Drink some water soon. You're hydrated

#### Amber or honey

You're not drinking enough water. Drink some water now. You're dehydrated

#### Syrup or brown ale

You're not drinking enough water. Drink water now and see your doctor if it persists. You could be severely dehydrated

#### Pink to reddish

Have you eaten beetroot, blueberries or rhubarb recently? They can turn your urine a reddish colour. If not, you may have blood in your urine. This could be nothing but can be a sign of a health problem. See your doctor

## It is a good idea to add some plain water into your daily routine.

If you prefer bottled or filtered water this is fine but tap water is just as good and also free.

Plan water and fluid breaks into your day to help you remember to drink enough. Why not keep a bottle of water with you when you are on the go?

Limit sugary fizzy drinks, squash, cordial and fruit juice as they can affect your mood. They are not good for your teeth, especially between meals and are also a source of extra calories. Take care not to have food or drink with caffeine close to bedtime as it can affect your sleep.

## Here are some ideas to make drinking water more enjoyable:

- Add a slice of lemon or lime to give extra taste
- Add some sugar free cordial to a glass of water
- Use fizzy water to make up cordial drinks or add to fruit juice
- Cool water down and make it tasty by adding ice cubes made from fresh fruit juice or cordial
- Try fruit or herbal teas. You could let them go cold and keep them in the fridge
- Add a slice of lemon to warm water as a refreshing start to the day
- Put a bottle of water in the freezer overnight. You can then have chilled water all through the next day as it melts
- Make homemade iced lollipops from cordial and water or juice and water. They are a great way to keep cool in the summer

“Nourish your brain and feel better.”

# Feel fab with fats

## The benefits of Omega 3

Omega 3 fatty acids are linked with better concentration, less low mood and improved brain function.

Your brain needs Omega 3 fatty acids to help it to work well (60% of your brain is fat). Omega 3 fats are known as 'essential fats' as your body can't make them. We have to get them from food.

## The best source of Omega 3 fats are oily fish:

- Salmon
- Trout
- Fresh tuna\*
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Pilchards
- Anchovies
- Sardines
- Hilsa

You need to take care of the amount of oily fish you eat as they can contain low levels of pollutants. These can build up in the body. However the health benefits are greater than the risks as long as you follow the recommended portions a week (one portion is about 140g).

## Recommended portions per week:

- Four portions for women, men and boys
- Two portions for girls and women who want to have a baby, are pregnant or breast-feeding

### Did you know?

\* Fresh tuna contains Omega 3 but not the canned version. Canned tuna is still a healthy food but the Omega 3 fatty acids are removed during processing

## Other sources of Omega 3 include:

- Shrimps, prawns, crab
- Seeds e.g. flaxseed (also known as linseed), pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds
- Oils e.g. flaxseed, rapeseed, hemp (Most 'vegetable oil' is rapeseed)
- Green leafy vegetables e.g. spinach, watercress, kale, rocket, seaweed
- Nuts e.g. walnuts, brazil nuts
- Some milk and eggs have Omega 3 fatty acids added to them (fortified). It will say on the label
- Supplements e.g. cod liver oil capsules

## Tips to get more Omega 3 into your diet:

- Use oils such as flaxseed, rapeseed or hemp in salad dressings
- Scatter walnuts or pumpkin seeds over salads or snack on them during the day
- Replace traditional cooking oils with flaxseed, rapeseed or hemp
- Add spinach leaves to salads or soups, as an extra vegetable with Sunday lunch, with pasta or pureed in sauces
- Have a fish barbeque instead of meat
- Try smoked mackerel and scrambled eggs for breakfast
- Mash sardines and tomatoes together on toast for lunch
- Pick up recipe cards for fish from the supermarket for free
- Try the fish recipes on pages 34-37 of this guide, or come up with some of your own

# Vital vitamins and minerals

## Your body needs vitamins and minerals to keep the brain healthy.

Some of the vitamins you need are B1, B12, C and folic acid. The minerals you need include potassium, zinc, magnesium, calcium, selenium and iron.

Eating a variety of fruit and vegetables will give you a good balance of many of these nutrients. They are also a good source of fibre and contain substances like antioxidants. These are all important for your health. Some nutrients are used by the body to make the 'feel good' chemical serotonin.

### Did you know?

Vitamin B1 (thiamine) is vital for your memory, concentration, mood and energy levels.

## Five-a-day

It is advised to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

It is best to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables of different colours. You can include fresh, frozen, chilled, dried or canned fruit and vegetables, and 100% fruit juice. Fruit juice can only count as one portion, no matter how much you drink.

When buying tinned fruit and vegetables, choose those canned in water or natural juice. Try to get ones with no added sugar or salt. You can check the food label if you are not sure.

## How much is one portion of fruit or vegetables?

One portion is roughly one handful. An adult will have a larger portion size compared to a child. This is because children have smaller hands. On the next page there are some examples of portion sizes for adults.

## Vegetables:

- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots, peas or sweetcorn
- One cereal bowl of mixed salad
- One medium onion,
- One handful of okra, celery sticks, mushrooms or cherry tomatoes
- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked ackee or butternut squash
- Half a large karela
- Two broccoli florets

## Fruits:

- One medium apple, pear, banana or orange
- A slice of melon
- One cereal bowl of chopped fruit
- Two satsumas, figs or plums
- Three dates or dried apricots
- One tablespoon of raisins
- One cupful of grapes or cherries (250ml)
- One glass of fruit juice (150ml)
- Six lychee

## Can you just take vitamin pills?

Vitamin supplements don't have the same benefits as eating fruit and vegetables. They do not contain fibre, which is needed by the body to keep your guts healthy. Fruit and vegetables also contain other nutrients that are not found in supplements.

## Add more fruit and veg to your diet:

- Add vegetables to a meat curry or stew
- Add salad to your sandwiches for extra colour and crunch
- Try a stir-fry, they only take a few minutes to make and are really tasty
- Snack on a piece of fruit, or chop celery and carrots into sticks. See the snazzy snacks section on page 38
- Chop up fruit and add it to your breakfast cereal or desserts
- Drink fruit juice with your breakfast every day (this can only count as one of your five-a-day)
- Whiz up a fruit smoothie as a tasty way to get energy
- Try new ways of cooking vegetables e.g. grilling or oven baking

## Vitamin D is another mood boosting nutrient.

Most of the Vitamin D we need comes from sunshine, not food. Your skin makes it when you are out in the sun and that's why it's called the sunshine vitamin. Not having enough is linked with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and depression.

Your body will produce Vitamin D if you go outside for a few minutes around the middle of the day. The best time of day is between 11am and 3pm. You don't need to sunbathe. Simply exposing your face and forearms to the sun is enough. You are more likely to lack Vitamin D in the winter when there is less sun.

## Some foods contain small amounts of Vitamin D:

- Oily fish
- Cereals with added Vitamin D
- Eggs
- Margarine (but not low fat spreads)
- Milk including evaporated and powdered milk
- Other dairy foods e.g. yoghurt and cheese
- Liver and kidneys

### Remember:

- Always cover up or put on sunscreen before your skin becomes red or burns
- When it comes to sun exposure, little and often is best

## Calcium

For Vitamin D to work properly you need to get enough calcium. Aim for three portions of dairy foods daily. If you do not take dairy foods you may need to consider a calcium and Vitamin D supplement.

### Foods that are good sources of calcium include:

- Milk
- Cheese
- Yoghurt
- Fish where you eat the bones (such as sardines and pilchards)
- Nuts
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- White bread and fortified flour
- Soya products with added calcium

## Supplements

Most of us in this country don't get enough sunlight to make the Vitamin D we need for our health and we only get only about 10-20% of the Vitamin D we need from food.

### Many people are also at risk of having Vitamin D deficiency. These include:

- Infants and children aged five and under
- Pregnant and breast-feeding women
- Older people aged 65 and over
- People with darker skin
- People who have low or no exposure to the sun, e.g. those who cover up a lot of their body, spend most of their time indoors (housebound, in a care home or in an office job)

You may therefore benefit from supplements. Check with your GP if you are unsure. You can buy supplements in supermarkets, chemists and even pound shops. (Pound shop tablets are just as safe as expensive brands.) Vitamin D3 is the best type to take. The recommended dose is 400 IU (international units) or 10 µg (micrograms) a day for adults.

## Super starches

You can reduce the highs and lows of mood and energy levels throughout the day by choosing foods that are digested slowly.

Starchy foods are also known as complex or 'slow release' carbohydrates. When these are digested glucose is released. This is fuel for your body and brain, giving you vital energy. Because the body breaks down the starch slowly, the glucose is released over a longer period of time keeping your mood steady. It can also make you feel fuller for longer. Mental activities use up glucose, so eating starch at every meal is a great way to keep brain energy levels up all day.

Try to avoid sugary foods because they are quickly absorbed into your blood and only give you a short burst of energy. Your mood may also be affected, for example, you may feel irritable. Examples of sugary foods are biscuits and sweets.

Good sources of starch include:

- Bread, breakfast cereals, pasta, chapattis, rice noodles, congee, (choose wholegrain versions when you can e.g. wholemeal bread, high fibre cereals)
- Wholegrain cereals e.g. barley, oats, rye, millet, bulgar wheat
- Root vegetables e.g. potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, dasheen, cassava, gari
- Green banana and plantain
- Maize (sweet corn), cornmeal
- Quinoa (pronounced keen-wah)



“Even small changes can make a difference.”

## Positive protein

### Protein is needed for the growth and repair of your body including your brain.

Some proteins contain tryptophan. The body needs tryptophan in order to make serotonin, the 'feel good' brain hormone. Serotonin is needed for nerve cells to communicate with each other.

Low levels of serotonin have been linked with low mood, lack of will power, and increased appetite.

### Serotonin helps with:

- Self-esteem
- Feeling calm
- Feeling optimistic
- Controlling appetite
- Reducing anxiety and depression
- Getting a good night's sleep

It is important to include a portion (3 to 4oz or 100g) of protein every day. This is to make sure your brain gets a regular supply of tryptophan.

### Protein foods include:

- Eggs
- Seeds
- Meat and fish (lean is best)
- Nuts e.g. pistachios, cashews, brazils, almonds
- Beans and pulses e.g. lentils (dhals) and chickpeas
- Dairy products e.g. milk, yogurt and cheese (low fat are still a good source of protein)
- Meat substitutes e.g. tofu and quorn
- Quinoa

## Be bright with breakfast

### Breakfast gives your body and brain fuel for the day ahead. Aim to have breakfast within two hours of getting up.

Research shows that eating breakfast can improve your memory and level of attention. It has been shown to help by improving mood and lowering stress levels. In children, breakfast can help them concentrate. It can also improve their focus and behaviour. Children do better in school if they have breakfast.

Breakfast can be a very good source of nutrients such as protein. It can also be a good source of fibre. Protein and fibre can help you feel fuller for longer. Foods high in fibre include fruit, porridge, wholemeal bread and many breakfast cereals.

### Here are some breakfast ideas:

- Include a portion of your five-a-day: a piece of fruit such as a banana, or a grapefruit
- You can add fruit to your cereal or porridge
- A bowl of cereal with milk
- Have a glass of 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Try a fruit salad
- Scrambled egg on wholemeal toast
- Smoked salmon and poached egg on a bagel
- Vegetarian sausages and grilled mushrooms



# Be aware of alcohol

## Alcohol affects your mood

A lot of people like drinking alcohol because of the way it makes them feel. Some people feel less shy or more confident. For others, alcohol helps them feel 'numb' so that they can block out stressful thoughts and emotions. But most of these things are only short-term effects and it is common to feel worse after drinking.

How you are feeling before you start drinking can affect your mood.

For example, if you are already feeling down then alcohol can make your low mood worse. This is partly because alcohol reduces levels of serotonin in your body, the 'feel good' chemical.

## Brain health

Vitamins are vital for your memory, concentration, mood and energy levels. Too much alcohol can reduce the levels of vitamins and minerals that are needed to keep your brain healthy because they are used up when breaking down the alcohol in your body after you drink.

## How does alcohol affect your sleep?

Drinking alcohol might make you feel sleepy at first but it can affect the length and quality of your sleep and you are likely to feel tired and irritable the next day.

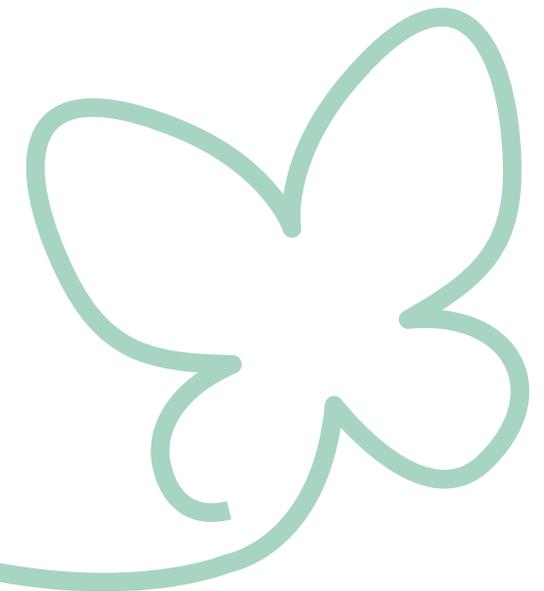
### This is because:

- It can affect the amount of deep sleep you get. You may wake up a lot during the night, preventing you from waking up feeling refreshed
- Alcohol can make you snore or snore more loudly
- Alcohol is a diuretic meaning you lose more fluid than you take in, so you become dehydrated. You may wake up thirsty in the night
- You may also wake up to use the toilet

## If you do drink, stick to the lower risk limits

Doctors tell us to limit the amount of alcohol in one day and have at least two alcohol free days in a row each week. These are called the 'lower risk drinking guidelines'. They are described in 'units of alcohol' instead of number of drinks. This is because alcoholic drinks come in a range of sizes and strengths.

There are times when it is best to avoid alcohol altogether. For example, women who are pregnant or thinking about having a baby, before driving or going to work, or when taking certain medicines. For more advice, speak to your GP or local pharmacist.

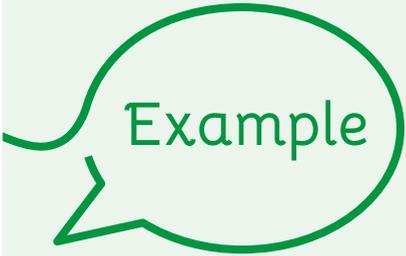


## Lower risk drinking guidelines

The UK government's low risk alcohol guidelines state that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption.

The unit guidelines are the same for men and women and it is advised that you should not regularly drink more than 14 units a week. The recommended 14 units is approximately six pints of lager or Ale or six glasses of wine.

Don't 'save up' your 14 units, you should spread them out across the week.



### Example

Here are some examples:

Drink	%	Measurement	Unit	Calories
Spirits	4.0	25ml (single)	1.0	61
Alcopops	4.0	275ml (bottle)	1.1	170
Beer	4.0	568ml (pint)	2.3	182
Beer	5.0	330ml	1.6	142
White wine	4.0	250ml (large glass)	3.2	238
Champagne	2.0	125ml (small glass)	1.5	89
Cider	4.5	568ml (pint)	2.6	216

## Top tips:

- If you drink alcohol, keep to the lower risk limits
- Make sure you have at least two alcohol free days in a row each week
- Have a glass of water for each alcoholic drink you have. It might help you to drink less. It will also keep you more hydrated
- Some people worry that they won't get off to sleep without having a drink. You can find other ways to help you sleep in the 'Food and sleep' section of this guide on page 44. You can also refer to the 'Sleep Well' self-help guide which you can download from [www.mhim.org.uk](http://www.mhim.org.uk)

## Information and websites:

- Download a free drinks tracker app that makes it easy to keep an eye on the booze and take control with daily tips and feedback from [www.nhs.uk/oneyou](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou)
- Visit [www.downyourdrink.org.uk](http://www.downyourdrink.org.uk) for useful advice to help you cut down on drinking
- Visit [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) for information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking
- Drinkline runs a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their drinking, or someone else's. Helpline: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am-8pm, weekends 11am-4pm)

# Food and mood diary

There is more and more research that shows the links between food and mood. You can explore how food and mood affects you by keeping a food and mood diary.

Use the diary to help you see when you eat, what you eat and how much you eat impacts on your feelings. It may seem to take up a lot of time, but it can tell you a lot. It can be interesting to find out more about yourself and the foods that you eat.

You can also use the diary to find out how what you felt before eating affects your choice of what and how much you eat and drink.



Below is an example of how to fill out a food and mood diary. On the next page you will find a blank diary to help you start your own.

Day	Time	How do you feel before eating?		What did you eat? How much?	What did you drink? How much?	How did you feel before eating?	
		Physically	Emotionally			Physically	Emotionally
Monday 10th	8am				Mug of tea (2 sugars)	Tired	Irritable
	10am	Restless	Fed up	3 Biscuits	Mug of tea (2 sugars)	Tired	Anxious, unable to focus
	1pm		Fine	Cheese and salad sandwich Crisps (small packet)	Water (2 cups)	Satisfied	Calmer



Fill in the diary below  
each day for the next  
few days

Don't worry if you forget, just try  
to fill it out the best that you can.

Is there anything you notice about  
the links between what you eat  
and how you feel? Are there any  
changes, however small, that you  
can make?

Day	Time	How do you feel before eating?		What did you eat? How much?	What did you drink? How much?	How do you feel after eating?	
		Physically	Emotionally			Physically	Emotionally

# Recipes

## Easy kedgeree

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup of brown rice
- Vegetable or chicken stock cube
- ¼ pack frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 Mackerel fillet

### Method:

Bring a pan of water to the boil. Add the rice then simmer for about 20 minutes. Add a stock cube for extra flavour if you wish. While the rice is simmering, cook the mixed vegetables and the mackerel fillet as per the packet instructions. Once the rice is cooked, mix the vegetables and rice together. On a plate break up the mackerel with a fork and add to the pan with the rice and vegetables. Mix together well and season with salt and pepper.

## Citrus salmon

### Ingredients:

- 1 salmon fillet
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

### Method:

Place the salmon in a baking dish. In a cup, mix all of the other ingredients together. Drizzle over the top of the salmon then bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes or until cooked. Serve up with your own choice of potatoes and vegetables.

## Chunky vegetable soup

### Ingredients:

- 2-4 potatoes, chopped
- 2 leeks, chopped
- 2-4 carrots, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 swede, chopped
- Vegetable stock cube

### Method:

Place the vegetables into a pan. Cover with boiling water. Add the stock cube and simmer for 30 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add any other herbs to taste. Mash or blend.

## Curried fish

### Ingredients:

- 1 salmon fillet
- Splash lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 20g root ginger, grated
- ½ teaspoon poppy seeds
- ½ teaspoon crushed peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground chillies
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- ½ cup of peas

### Method:

Season the salmon with lemon juice, turmeric and salt. Set aside to marinate for about 15 minutes. Fry the onion, garlic and grated ginger root until soft. Add the poppy seeds and crushed peppercorns. Stir in the coriander, cumin and chillies and cook for 5 minutes. Mix in the chopped tomatoes and peas. Place the salmon and juices in the pan and spoon the spice mix over the salmon. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the salmon is firm. Serve with rice and chutney.

## Chunky bean soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 pepper, chopped
- 1 courgette, chopped
- Mushrooms, chopped
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- Vegetable stock in 400ml water
- 1 tin berlotti, butter or kidney beans, drained
- 1 teaspoon mild chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon oregano

### Method:

Fry the veg in a pan on a high heat for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and herbs, fry for 2 minutes. Stir in the tinned tomatoes, add the vegetable stock. Simmer for 20 minutes. Blend together for a smooth texture. Add the beans and simmer for 5 more minutes. For a more filling meal you could add some dried pasta.

## More recipes

### Nutty pesto pasta

#### Ingredients:

- 150g dry pasta, any type
- Small jar of green or red pesto
- Handful of pine nuts, sesame seeds or linseed

#### Method:

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Drain the pasta and add it back to the pan, stir in a small jar of pesto. Toast the mixed seeds in a dry frying pan or under the grill for 2 minutes and sprinkle over the top of the pasta. Serve with vegetables or salad.

### Good mood pizza

#### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs
- Granary bread, pitta bread or classic pizza base
- Grated cheese
- Pizza toppings of your choice, cooked separately if needed

#### Method:

Fry the onion and garlic in a pan. Add the tomato paste, chopped tomatoes and mixed herbs and simmer until you have a thick sauce. Spread the sauce over your chosen pizza base. Add your toppings. Bake in the oven for about 15-20 minutes or until the base is crisp and the topping is golden at gas mark 6 / 200°C.

### Fruity flapjack

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup of margarine
- 1 tablespoon of honey or fig syrup
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup walnut pieces
- 1 cup dried apricots or sultanas

#### Method:

Slowly melt the margarine in a pan. Mix all of the other ingredients together and add to the melted butter. Press the mixture into a baking dish (about 1 inch/2.5cm thick). Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown at gas mark 4/180°C or 350°F.

### Berry delightful smootie

#### Ingredients:

- 1 handful mixed berries e.g. blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries (frozen or fresh)
- 2 bananas, chopped
- 250ml orange juice
- 250ml apple juice

#### Method:

Place all the ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth. For a thicker consistency you could use 400ml of semi-skimmed milk, 2 dessert spoons of natural yogurt or 2 scoops of vanilla ice cream.

### Smoked mackerel pâté

#### Ingredients:

- 1 smoked mackerel fillet
- 1 small tub of natural yogurt
- Lemon juice, to taste
- Salt and pepper, to taste

#### Method:

Take the skin off the smoked mackerel. Mash together with the natural yogurt. Season to taste. Enjoy with toast or crackers.

“There are lots  
of benefits  
to eating a  
healthy diet.”



# Changing your eating habits

**Making changes to your diet can feel like hard work because you have to change your whole mindset about food.**

You may have lots of bad habits that have been built up over time so don't feel disheartened if you slip up or have a bad day. You can stay motivated by varying what and how you eat.

## The importance of routine

Sticking to a routine can help you focus on tasks and add structure to your day. Eating at regular times is essential to maintaining energy levels throughout the day.

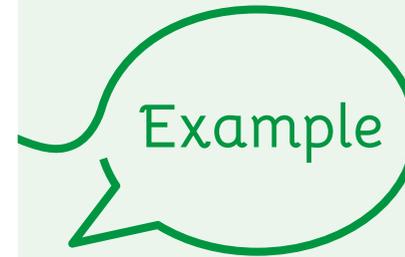
You could start by planning your meals and snacks for the week. Then write a shopping list and only buy what is on your shopping list. Try to work towards having three main meals per day.

Most of us don't need to eat between meals unless we are really active. If you feel the need to snack, then plan for healthy snacks.

## Healthy snack ideas include:

- Fresh fruit e.g. chopped melon, pineapple or a banana
- A couple of rice cakes or oatcakes with nut butter
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Tinned fruit in juice
- A handful of nuts
- A low fat yoghurt
- A slice of wholemeal toast
- Bread sticks

## Meal plan



Below is an example of a meal plan. Use this as a guide to make your own to suit your lifestyle and body clock.

Sometimes you might mistake thirst for hunger. If you are not sure, drink a glass of water then wait 20 minutes to see if you are still hungry.

Time of day	Meal/snack	What you eat
8am	Breakfast	Toast with butter
10.30am	Morning snack	Oatcakes and a smoothie
12.30pm	Lunch	Tuna sandwich, apple, yogurt
3.30pm	Afternoon snack	Boiled egg with slice of bread and a drink
6pm	Evening meal	Chicken breast, mixed vegetables and potatoes
8pm	Evening snack	Banana and a drink

## More ways to enjoy healthy eating

- Try different seasonal foods
- Find new recipes from cook books or on the internet
- To save money make packed lunches for work
- Cook from scratch as often as possible, that way you always know what's in your food
- Enjoy tasting your food and eat slowly
- Do your best to sit down to eat with no other distractions e.g. watching TV
- Find out what textures and tastes you like e.g. crunchy or soft, sweet or sour
- Sit down together for meals. It may sound simple, but it's not often that we sit down together to eat. It's a good time to share and catch up with what's been going on in each others' lives
- Take a packed lunch or a picnic along next time you go out for the day. It's cheap, convenient and fun.
- Get the kids cooking! Invite some of your kid's friends around for a fun healthy cooking session
- Explore your local area to see what's on offer e.g. local market stalls selling fresh produce or a community cafe where you could go for a light lunch

## The tips below were kindly given to us by the staff and volunteers at the Manchester Mind Cafe\*:

- 'Chop up carrot and cucumber into sticks to snack on during the day'
- 'I carry bottles of tap water around with me all day so I always have a drink to hand. I feel much more healthy'
- 'Using a steamer is a really healthy way to cook food. You can throw just about anything in there, meat, potatoes, rice, it's easy and it's a lovely, healthy alternative to frying in oil'
- 'I carry seeds with me to snack on, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are really nice'
- 'When I cook I try to make a big batch. I store the leftovers in plastic containers and freeze it so I have a stock pile of ready made meals to save time during the week'

### Did you know?

The \*Manchester Mind Cafe is a community cafe run partly by users of mental health services.  
[www.manchestermind.org/Cafe.php](http://www.manchestermind.org/Cafe.php)

How could you make healthy eating more fun and sociable?

Exercise

# Food and sleep

**Having a good night's sleep helps us function well, concentrate, and feel refreshed. A lack of sleep can impact on our mood, making us feel irritable or snappy.**

What you eat and how much you eat and drink can all affect the quality of your sleep. There are foods that can help you to sleep called 'sleepers' and other foods that keep you awake called 'wakers'.

## Sleepers

Sleepers contain tryptophan, which helps the brain to produce serotonin and melatonin. These are chemicals that help you relax and feel sleepy. Tryptophan is higher in foods such as milk, turkey, nuts, bananas, whole grains and chickpeas. Foods such as lettuce and honey also induce sleep. Calcium helps the brain use the tryptophan to make melatonin, the sleep hormone. For good sources of calcium see the section on Vitamin D on page 20.

## Wakers

Wakers can keep you awake for a number of reasons. Spicy and fatty foods can cause heartburn which makes it harder to fall asleep and can also wake you up during the night. Eating meals high in fat will make your digestive system have to work harder and longer. Eating or drinking too much can make you less comfy when settling down to bed as it keeps your digestive system active for longer.

The timing of when you eat and drink is important because it can disturb your sleep. A heavy meal too close to bedtime can cause indigestion and if you drink a lot in the evening you may have to get up to go to the toilet during the night.

## Caffeine

Food and drinks that contain caffeine can keep you awake because caffeine increases the level of adrenaline in your blood, making you more alert. This makes your heart beat and breathing faster. The effects of caffeine can last eight to 12 hours. It takes five hours for the body to get rid of half of the caffeine you have had. This means that if you take anything with caffeine in, close to your bedtime, it will reduce the quality of your sleep and keep you awake. Having lots of caffeinated drinks during the day can also cause withdrawal symptoms at night making it harder to fall asleep.

## Many food, drinks and medicines contain caffeine including:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Cola
- Energy drinks
- Hot chocolate
- Chocolate
- Some prescribed drugs and non-prescribed drugs e.g. common pain relievers, weight loss pills, diuretics and cold medicines (these drugs may have as much or even more caffeine than a cup of coffee)

## Top tips:

- Avoid eating a large heavy meal too close to bedtime
- Avoid going to bed with an empty stomach
- Try to eat your evening meal at least two hours before bedtime
- A lighter evening meal is more likely to give you a restful night's sleep
- Avoid high fat foods before bedtime
- If you're prone to heartburn, avoid spicy or fatty foods
- Avoid drinking too much water/fluid during the evening
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Avoid drinking caffeinated drinks. Even if you do not think caffeine affects you, it could affect the quality of your sleep. Try avoiding caffeine within 6 to 8 hours of going to bed to see if it can help improve sleep quality
- If you need to have a snack close to bedtime, make this small and light. You could try a warm milky drink (try adding honey), a slice of toast with peanut butter or a small bowl of cereal or porridge

## Stepping stones



Hopefully this guide has helped you understand the effect food has on your mood.

It's not easy to change your habits. Start making a plan by writing down some small changes you could make. Use the information in this guide to help.

Over the next week...

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Over the next month...

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Over the next six months...

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Beyond this...

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## Other sources of help

### Books

- **Food and Mood Handbook**  
A Geary
- **Healing Without Freud or Prozac**  
D Servan-Schreiber
- **The Omega 3 Connection:  
The Groundbreaking  
Antidepressant Diet  
and Brain Program**  
A L Stoll
- **Feeding Minds: The Impact  
of Food on Mental Health**  
Mental Health Foundation  
free download from  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/  
publications/feeding-minds](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/feeding-minds)

You can borrow self-help books to improve and manage your wellbeing from your local library.

### Organisations

- **B-eat Eating Disorder Organisation**  
(Can provide access to an interpreter)  
[www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)  
Adult line: 0345 634 1414  
(Mon to Wed, 1pm–4pm)  
Email: [help@b-eat.co.uk](mailto:help@b-eat.co.uk)  
Youthline: 0345 634 7650  
(Mon to Wed, 1pm–4pm)  
Text: 07786 201 820  
Email: [fyp@b-eat.co.uk](mailto:fyp@b-eat.co.uk)
- **Diabetes UK**  
(Includes interpretation service)  
[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0345 123 2399  
(Mon to Fri, 9am–7pm)  
Email: [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk)
- **The British Heart Foundation**  
[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0300 330 3311  
(Mon to Fri, 9am–5pm)

### Websites

#### [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

This website offers free Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) self-help information, resources and includes therapy worksheets.

#### [www.llttf.com](http://www.llttf.com)

The 'Living Life to the Full' website is a free, online life skills course. It covers a range of skills to help deal with everyday stresses.

#### [www.mhim.org.uk](http://www.mhim.org.uk)

This is the 'Mental Health in Manchester' website. It has information about mental health issues and there are details of local services. It also includes information in a range of languages, and you can download the full range of self-help guides from this website.

#### [buzzmanchester.co.uk](http://buzzmanchester.co.uk)

buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service are experts in health improvement and self-care offering one to one support and training for a range of health and wellbeing issues.

#### [www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au)

This website features free online self-help modules and resources.

#### [ecouch.anu.edu.au](http://ecouch.anu.edu.au)

E-couch is a free interactive self-help program. It covers a range of topics. These include modules for depression, anxiety and worry.

#### [moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://moodgym.anu.edu.au)

Moodgym is a free online self-help program. It covers a range of skills to help prevent and deal with depression.

#### [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

This is the 'Royal College of Psychiatrists' website. It is an online mental health resource.