

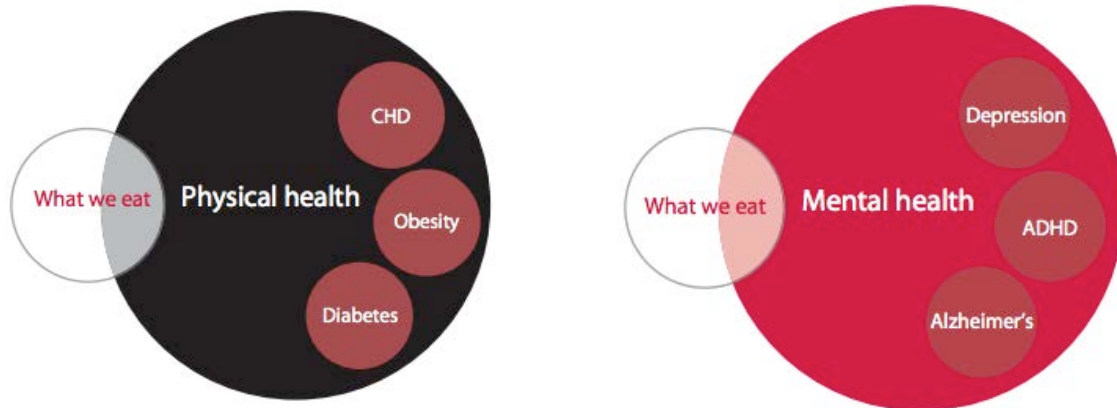
## Eating for Mental Health and Wellbeing

We always hear about eating healthy for physical wellness but it's also important to eat healthy for mental wellness. Take care of the mind and body with proper nutrition!

Think about how you feel after an unhealthy vs. healthy meal.

- ❖ For an unhealthy meal, maybe you drive to McDonalds, go through the drive thru, and eat in front of the TV. After this you rather tired, so you make sure to relax and maybe put on a movie before bed.
- ❖ For a healthy meal, maybe you go to the grocery store or farmers market. You pick out fresh fruits and vegetables, prepare them into a nice meal, and sit at the table. Maybe an hour or two after dinner you feel like going on a walk, chatting with the neighbors, watching the sunset.

How we feel after a meal relates to how your body is reacting to the food. The benefits of a healthy meal not only effect how you feel energy wise but effects your activities after the meal. After the preparation of a healthy meal, the meal itself, exercise, chatting with the neighbors, and watching the sunset, you most likely will feel a lot happier than just being tired and watching a movie.



Eating healthy, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep are all important for overall wellness.

So how can we eat for a happier mind and body?

- Complex carbohydrates, healthy fat, lean protein, and vitamins and minerals
- Most importantly: **BALANCE**
  - The most important aspect of nutrition
  - Too much of this/not enough that
  - Unbalanced = Unhealthy
  - It's okay to treat yourself, but not all the time!

**So how can we make sure we have a balanced diet?**

### Balance Your Intake: Adequate intake of each food group

The easiest way to ensure adequate intake of each nutrient, is to ensure adequate intake of each food group!



	<b>2,000 calorie diet</b>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>2.5 cups</b>
Dark leafy greens /week	1.5 cups
Red/orange vegetables /week	5.5 cups
Legumes (beans & peas) /week	1.5 cups
Starchy vegetables /week	5 cups
Non-starchy vegetables /week	4 cups
<b>Fruits</b>	<b>2 cups</b>
<b>Grains</b>	<b>6 oz</b>
Whole grains/day	3 oz
Refined grains/day	3 oz
<b>Dairy</b>	<b>3 cups</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<b>5.5 oz</b>
Seafood /week	8 oz
Meat, eggs, poultry /week	26 oz
Nuts & seeds /week	5 oz
<b>Oils</b>	<b>27 g</b>
<b>Other calories needed not from food groups</b>	<b>270 kcal</b>

**Role of Nutrients in Mental Health:**

The results of recent studies suggest that dietary improvement with the help of a registered dietitian, may provide an effective treatment strategy for the management of depression and anxiety.

**The Mediterranean diet** has been found to be the most beneficial diet in regard to the improvement of overall mental health as well as symptoms associated with mental health disorders.

<b>Includes</b>	<b>Excludes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains</li><li>• healthful fats, such as nuts, seeds, and olive oil</li><li>• moderate amounts of dairy and fish</li><li>• very little white meat and red meat</li><li>• few eggs</li><li>• red wine in moderation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refined grains: white bread, white pasta, and pizza dough containing white flour</li><li>• refined oils: canola oil and soybean oil</li><li>• foods with added sugars, such as pastries, sodas, and candies</li><li>• deli meats, hot dogs, and other processed meats</li><li>• processed or packaged foods</li></ul>

The Mediterranean diet is so helpful because it contains several nutrients shown to decrease depression:

<b>Nutrient</b>	<b>How it helps</b>	<b>Foods</b>
Selenium	might help improve mood and reduce anxiety	Brazil nuts, fish, meat, beans, oatmeal, milk products, enriched foods
Vitamin D	may help improve the symptoms of depression	Fortified milk and juices, fatty fish, eggs and from the sun!
Omega-3s	reduce the risk of mood disorders and brain diseases by enhancing brain function and preserving the myelin sheath that protects nerve cells.	Cold-water fish, such as salmon, sardines, tuna, and mackerel. Flaxseed, chia seeds, walnuts.

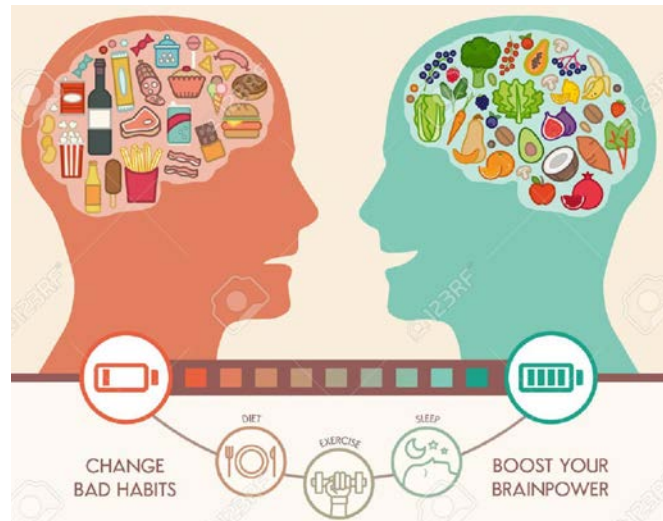
<p>Antioxidants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vitamin A, C, &amp; E</li> </ul>	<p>Antioxidants help remove free radicals, which are the waste products of natural bodily processes that can build up in the body. If the body cannot eliminate enough free radicals, oxidative stress can develop. A number of health problems can result, which may include anxiety and depression.</p>	<p><b>Vitamin A:</b> Sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, spinach, red bell peppers, apricots, eggs, and fortified foods</p> <p><b>Vitamin C:</b> Citrus fruits, red bell pepper, strawberries, tomato juice, cantaloupe, and fortified foods</p> <p><b>Vitamin E:</b> Sunflower seeds, almonds, vegetable oils, peanut butter, fortified cereals</p>
<p>B vitamins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B<sub>12</sub> and folate</li> </ul>	<p>Protects and maintain the nervous system, including the brain. They may help reduce the risk and symptoms of mood disorders, such as depression.</p>	<p><b>Folate:</b> leafy greens, beans, peas, lentils, <b>B12:</b> meat and milk products</p>
<p>Zinc</p>	<p>Boosts the immune system and may influence depression. Some studies have suggested that zinc levels may be lower in people with depression and that zinc may help antidepressants work more effectively.</p>	<p>Lean meat, poultry, seafood, milk, whole grains, beans, seeds, and nuts</p>
<p>Protein</p>	<p>Protein enables the body to grow and repair, but it may also help people with depression. A protein called <b>tryptophan</b> to create <b>serotonin</b> the “feel good” hormone.</p>	<p>Lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans, peas, soy foods, quinoa, nuts and seeds. Tryptophan is found in tuna, turkey, and chickpeas.</p>
<p>Probiotics</p>	<p>May boost the levels of beneficial bacteria in the gut. Healthy gut microbiota may reduce the symptoms and risk of depression</p>	<p>Yogurt, kefir</p>

The Mediterranean diet has been shown to not only beneficial for chronic diseases, specifically for heart disease and diabetes, but mental health as well.

#### What else can assist in improving mood?

- ♣ Getting at least 150 minutes of physical exercise each week
- ♣ Spending time outdoors
- ♣ Spending time with friends and family
- ♣ Avoiding alcohol and smoking
- ♣ Moderate intake of caffeine

- ♣ Avoiding refined and processed foods
- ♣ Getting 7–8 hours of sleep every night
- ♣ Maintaining a healthy weight
- ♣ Drinking plenty of water



**Carbohydrates** are your bodies main source of energy. They can be broken into two categories:

### Complex Carbs:

- Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- These keep you fuller longer and satisfy you more quickly, especially because of the fiber!
- Found in foods filled with vitamins and minerals



### Simple Carbs:

- Candy, cake, soda and other sugary, processed foods
- Raise your bodies glucose levels quickly which may lead to an energy or blood sugar crash later on.



**Fats** are an important part of the diet and are necessary for energy, helping the body absorb nutrients and for producing hormones.

**Unsaturated** fats may lower unhealthy cholesterol levels, therefore lowering your risk for heart disease and stroke.

LIQUID at room temperature. From plants, such as vegetable oils, avocados, olives, nuts and seeds. Found in some margarines made with plant oils.

- **Omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids:** several studies have shown that this essential fatty acid improves heart health, supports mental health, cognitive functioning, prevents dementia, promotes bone health, and provides several other benefits!
- The American diet is deficient in essential omega-3 fatty acids which can contribute to chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease.
- Omega-3s are found mostly in fish, which is why eating fish is so highly recommended and many people take fish oil supplements!

**Saturated** and **trans fats** raise cholesterol levels, which increases one's risk for heart disease and stroke. SOLID at room temperature.

Saturated fats: animal fats such as butter, meats, and dairy. Also found in coconut and palm oil.

Trans Fats: produced artificially, found in some margarines, baked goods, and fast food.

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**Protein** is important for every cell of your body. It's needed to build and repair muscles, skin, and cells. It's important for metabolism, energy, and immune health!

- It's found in meat products (chicken, turkey, beef), seafood, eggs, and dairy products.

