



**Anxiety & Stress Relief**

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## **FOOD FOR YOUR MOOD**

### **For a healthy mood:**

1. **Eat small, frequent meals.** Five meals per day are ideal. Or you could eat three meals and one or two snacks. Nuts, trail mix and dried fruit are snacks you can easily carry with you. Apples contain chromium which stabilizes blood sugar levels, preventing the mood cycles. Eat when moderately hungry and eat until you feel moderately full.
2. **Eat your vegetables:** Your parents were right. The more vegetables you have in your diet, the better your mood. Vegetables are high in complex carbohydrates, which act like natural antidepressants and tranquilizers. In other words, they keep you calm and feeling good.
3. **Stick to the good carbs:** Some carbs are good. Some are bad. Reduce refined carbohydrates found in white bread, white pasta and white rice, and refined sugars in soda, cereals, cakes and other snack foods. Stick to whole food complex carbs found in whole grains, vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and peas. Unrefined sugars found in honey, maple syrup and barley malt are better, but should be consumed in moderation.
4. **Go easy on your gut:** Be kind to your digestive system and it will love you back. Following the rules above minimizes the burden on your gastrointestinal system. Eating high protein foods in large quantities produces unfriendly bacteria, increasing emotional stress and creating a vicious cycle of poor digestion and a worsening mood.
5. **Eat foods rich in magnesium:** Magnesium is a natural tranquilizer. Try a grapefruit 30 minutes before bed. Eat roasted peanuts, tofu or broccoli. If you can handle the side effects, try adzuki and fava beans.
6. **Drink your water:** Hydrate frequently for a long, healthy life. It helps the mood too. And there's no substitute for water.
7. **Learn to eat slowly and mindfully:** It's not just what you eat, it's how you eat. If you wolf the food down while standing up and multi-tasking, you'll wind up with a bad mood for dessert. The next time you eat, see if you can stop the world: Nothing else exists except for that food. Concentrate on every bite, focusing on the texture, the smell, and every sensation you experience. Be fully present in the moment with your food, and eat slowly. Chew your food well and enjoy every bite.
8. **Now go out and take a walk:** Walking after a meal aids digestion and improves mood. Five to ten-minute brisk walks have been shown to reduce tension and increase energy level. Try a walk at about 3 PM, when your tension level is at its highest and your energy level is at its lowest.
9. **Eat good fats, not bad fats:** Fats from vegetables and fish will help to put you in a good mood. Fats stabilize blood sugar and reduce urges to binge. Eat nuts, seeds, tofu and lots of fresh water fish (Buy organic or wild fish when possible). Minimize fats from meat and dairy.
10. **Avoid the mood busters:** Watch out for cigarettes, caffeine, alcohol and sugar. They will trick you by improving your mood now and punishing you later.