

# **Food and Mood**



**A self help guide**

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## How might this guide help you?

There are many emotional illnesses or problems that people face which could be related to the things that they eat. Some of these include:

- **Depression**
- **Anxiety**
- **ME, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**
- **Post Natal Depression**
- **Schizophrenia**
- **Insomnia**
- **Pre Menstrual Syndrome**
- **ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)**

Experiencing these problems or illnesses can also affect how a person feels about eating. For example, feeling anxious or depressed can result in a loss of appetite or lack of interest in food. However, eating regularly and eating more of certain foods can have a positive impact on our mental health, and the symptoms associated with poor mental health.





## Place a tick next to those symptoms you experience regularly:

### How you feel

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

### What happens to your body

- Fast heart beat
- Increased blood pressure
- Cravings
- Chest feels tight and painful
- Aches and pains
- Bloating
- Constipation
- Dehydration
- Nauseas
- Dizzy, shaking, fainting
- Headaches

### How you think

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

### What you do

- Lose interest in things
- Get snappy and irritable
- Difficulty remembering things
- Become/get aggressive
- Get angry at people
- Restless
- Become hyperactive or under active

There are a number of things that you could do to help with some of these symptoms. These include:

- Visiting your GP for advice.
- Referring to the contact list provided at the back of this booklet.
- Visiting your local 'Health Information Point' located in public libraries.
- Making changes to your diet. There is evidence to suggest that making changes to your diet can help with these symptoms. This guide outlines some of the changes that you might wish to make. The important thing is that any changes that you make to your diet can be done gradually even making small changes can add up to big benefits.



## Food and mood: What we know

A **diet low in fruit and vegetables** may contribute towards a range of mental health problems. This is because a balance of vitamins and nutrients are needed to keep the brain healthy.

Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions a day) will provide a healthy balance of many of the nutrients needed.

**Not drinking enough water** can make you feel tired, low in energy and unable to concentrate. This is because the body is around 3 quarters water and 2 litres (8 glasses) is needed every day to replace lost fluids (more on a hot day or after exercising). Drinking non caffeinated drinks throughout the day will keep the body hydrated.

A **diet low in Omega 3 (and sometimes 6) fatty acids** may contribute towards a range of mental health problems. This is because the food we eat, and how much we eat has an impact on how efficiently our mind and body works.

Eating lots of 'essential' or 'polyunsaturated' fats such as Omega 3, is thought to have a positive effect on how well our brain cells function and communicate, with each other and the rest of the body.

Essential fats such as Omega 3 are not produced naturally by the body and so can only be obtained through the food we eat or supplements. Eating lots of foods such as oily fish, walnuts, linseed oil and spinach at least 3 times a week can provide a healthy source of Omega 3 fatty acids.

## Take the test!

A good starting point can be to look at the food you are eating now as a basis for making any changes. Take a look at the lists of food and tick whether you eat them a lot, sometimes or not at all. You may want to take this test again in a few weeks to see if you have made any changes.

The **red foods** are high in solid fats, sugar or caffeine and so may have a negative effect on your mental health. You don't need to stop eating or drinking any of these completely, but you may want to try and cut down on the ones you are eating a lot of, to just eating sometimes.

The **green foods** are high in vitamins, minerals, and omega 3 fatty acids and so may improve your mental health. A healthy diet would involve eating these foods a lot. Try introducing some of the foods from the green list to see if you like them.

Take a look at the pages on 'Wake up with water', 'Feel fab with fats' and '5 a Day' to see the 3 main things that could help. Throughout this guide you will find lots of ideas, tips and recipes to help you get started or to keep you inspired.





<b>Food</b>	<b>I eat or drink this a lot</b>	<b>I eat or drink this sometimes</b>	<b>I never eat or drink this</b>
<b>Cakes</b>			
<b>Pies or pasties</b>			
<b>Sweets</b>			
<b>Fried foods</b>			
<b>Butter</b>			
<b>Coffee</b>			
<b>Tea</b>			
<b>Coke or fizzy drinks</b>			
<b>Crisps</b>			
<b>Sugar</b>			
<b>Alcohol</b>			
<b>Water</b>			
<b>Fruit</b>			
<b>Vegetables</b>			
<b>Oily fish e.g. mackerel or sardines</b>			
<b>Walnuts</b>			
<b>Nut oils e.g. linseed oil</b>			
<b>Spinach</b>			
<b>Watercress</b>			
<b>Pumpkin seeds</b>			
<b>Seaweed</b>			
<b>Salads</b>			
<b>Total Ticks</b>			



## Wake up with water!!

Water is essential for life. Dehydration can cause poor concentration, headaches, tiredness, nausea and constipation. As the body is about two thirds water about 8 glasses (2 litres) are needed per day to replace lost fluids (more if it is a hot day or you are exercising). Many people suffer from dehydration even if they do not feel thirsty.

So how do you know if you are dehydrated? A good way of knowing is by the colour of your urine!! A pale straw colour is healthy. If your urine is a dark yellow colour, you could benefit from drinking more water.

Planning water breaks throughout the day may help you to remember to drink enough, or why not keep a bottle of water with you when you are on the go.

Here are some ideas to make drinking water more enjoyable, particularly if you do not like the taste. If you prefer bottled or filtered water this is fine, however water from the tap is great also and only costs 1 pence for 12 glasses.

- Add a slice of lemon or lime to give extra taste
- Why not add some sugar free cordial to a glass of water
- Cool water down and make it tasty by adding ice cubes made from fresh fruit juice or cordial
- Drink half juice, half water as a cheap alternative to pop
- Add a fruit tea bag to hot water, or why not add a slice of lemon to warm water as a refreshing start to the day.
- Putting a bottle of water in the freezer over night is a great way of ensuring chilled water throughout the next day as it melts.
- Make home made iced lollipops from cordial and water or juice and water in the summer and enjoy throughout the day as a cool refreshing alternative.

If you really dislike the taste of water, ensure that your fluids are maintained by drinking alternatives such as fresh fruit juice or milk drinks. However, be careful of the sugar and caffeine content of some other drinks.

## Feeling Fab with Fats! - The benefits of Omega 3

Omega 3 (and sometimes 6) fatty acids can be found in oily fish and other foods. These include:

- Fresh Tuna
- Salmon
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Pilchards
- Rainbow Trout
- Shrimp
- Crab
- Sardines
- Flax seeds (also known as linseeds)  
- raw or roasted
- Flaxseed oil
- Rapeseed oil
- Hemp oil
- Walnuts
- Spinach
- Seaweed
- Watercress
- Pumpkin seeds

Eating these foods at least 3 times per week can provide a healthy source of omega 3 fatty acids which may improve your mood.

Canned fish can also be used, but check the labels as some brands of tuna may have had the omega 3 oils removed during processing.



## Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Use the oils in salad dressings.
- Scatter walnuts or pumpkin seeds over salads or snack on them during the day.
- Replace traditional cooking oils with those from the list above.
- Add spinach leaves to salads or why not add them to soups, as an extra vegetable with Sunday lunch, with pasta or pureed in sauces.
- Have a fish barbeque as a change.
- 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 page 16 of this guide, or come up with some of your own.

These nutrients can also be gained from taking supplements in addition to the recommended dietary requirement. However, if you are considering taking any supplements read the labels carefully, ensuring that the container has an approved kite mark. Alternatively consult your GP, pharmacist or community dietician for advice.

## 5 a Day

### 5 a Day – what is it all about?

Eating a variety of fruit and vegetables will give you a good balance of vitamins and minerals which are needed to keep the brain healthy. Many fruits and vegetables are high in folic acid, vitamin C and potassium and are also a good source of fibre and other substances such as antioxidants. All these nutrients are important for your health.

It is recommended that you try to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. This can include fresh, frozen, chilled, dried or canned fruit and vegetables and 100% fruit juice.



## 5 a Day - Your questions answered

### How much is 1 portion of fruit?

Roughly a handful – for example: half a large grapefruit, a slice of melon, 2 satsumas, 3 dried apricots, 1 tablespoon of raisins, 1 medium apple, 1 medium banana, 1 medium pear.

### How much is 1 portion of vegetables?

Roughly a handful – for example: 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots, peas or sweetcorn, 1 cereal bowl of mixed salad, 7 cherry tomatoes, 2 broccoli florets.

### Can't I just take vitamin pills?

Not really. Dietary supplements do not have the same benefits as eating more fruit and vegetables, because fruit and vegetables contain additional beneficial substances such as fibre.

### Here are some tips to get you started:

- For extra sweetness, chop fruit and add it to your breakfast cereal, or add to desserts.
- Stir fries only take a few minutes to prepare and are a tasty meal.
- Need a snack? Have a piece of fruit, or chop celery and carrots into sticks for a crunchy snack.
- Drink fruit juice with your breakfast every day.
- Try new ways of cooking vegetables – tomatoes, onions and courgettes taste great when grilled, baked or roasted.
- Add salad to your sandwiches for extra colour and crunch.



## So.....what is the cost?

Eating well doesn't have to mean spending lots of money. A price comparison at a major supermarket showed that eating a healthier diet can work out less expensive... great if you're on a budget!

Oats	£0.38
Bran Cereal	£0.88
Orange Juice X 3	£1.05
Bananas X 10	£1.10
Apples X 10	£1.30
Brown Rice	£0.60
Brown Bread	£0.74
Tuna	£1.65
Tinned Fruit X 2	£0.78
Nuts	£0.88
Broccoli	£1.28
Carrots	£0.68
Potatoes	£0.88
Lettuce	£0.70
Peppers	£0.80
Tomatoes	£0.70
Celery	£0.54
Cucumber	£0.26
Tinned Tomatoes X 2	£0.30
Chicken Thighs X 6	£2.90
Salmon fillet	£1.40
Mince	£0.62
Brown pasta	£0.31
Milk X 4 pints	£1.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21.84</b>

Corn Cereal	£0.75
Sugar coated cereal	£1.58
Bread	£0.75
Rice	£0.68
Cheese	£2.74
Ham	£1.48
Crisps X 7	£1.75
Chocolate	£0.60
Biscuits	£0.58
Pop X 3	£3.96
Chips	£0.90
Cakes	£0.78
Ready meals X 7	£16.57
Pasta	£0.31
Pasta sauce	£0.98
Milk X 4 pints	£1.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>£35.52</b>

\* Actual prices from a major supermarket during August 2005, based on a weekly shop for one person.



## Recipes

### Easy Kedgeree

Put ½ cup of **brown rice** on to boil for about 20 minutes (or until cooked), add a **vegetable or chicken stock cube** to the water for extra flavour. Then cook ¼ packet of **mixed frozen vegetables** and **1 mackerel fillet** according to the packet instructions. When cooked mix the vegetables and rice together. On a plate break up and flake the mackerel with a fork and add to the rice and vegetables. Mix well and season with **pepper**.

### Citrus Salmon

Place **1 salmon fillet** in a baking dish. In a cup, mix 2 tablespoons of **lemon juice**, 2 tablespoons of **orange juice**, a dash of **olive oil, salt** and **pepper** together. Drizzle over the top of the salmon and 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

Chop up a selection of fresh winter vegetables into a pan e.g. **potatoes, leeks, carrots, onions, swede**. Cover with boiling water and add a **vegetable stock cube** and simmer for 30 minutes. Add **pepper** and **herbs** to taste. Mash or blend.

### Chunky Bean Soup

Chop up some **onions, peppers, courgettes** and **mushrooms** into a pan. Stir in some **tinned tomatoes** with **garlic** and **herbs** and a tin of **berlotti, butter** or **kidney beans** cover with water. For a more filling meal add some **dried pasta**. Simmer for 20 minutes.

### Nutty Pesto Pasta

Cook some **pasta** according to the instructions on the packet. Once drained, stir in a **small jar of pesto**. Toast some **mixed seeds e.g. pine nuts, sesame seeds** and **linseed** in a dry frying pan or under the grill for 2 minutes and sprinkle over the top.

### Fruity Flapjack

Slowly melt 1 cup of **margarine** in a pan. Mix in 1 tablespoon of **honey** or **fig syrup** and then add 2 cups of **rolled oats**, ¼ cup of **walnut pieces** and ¼ cup of **dried apricots** or **sultanas**. Press the mixture into a baking dish (about 1 inch/2.5cm thick) and bake for about 30 minutes or until slightly browner in colour at gas mark 4/180 degrees C or 350 degrees F.



## Food and mood diary

There is growing evidence that there is a link between what foods we eat and our moods.

Keeping a food diary will help you to see when you eat, how much you eat and what you eat and how these 3 things can affect how you feel.

At first the idea of writing everything down might seem time consuming but hopefully as you get into it you will enjoy it as a process of learning more about yourself and the foods that you eat.

Below is a diary that you can use to record your food and moods. Some examples have been completed to help you.

Time & Date	What I Eat/ Drink	How I feel physically	How I feel emotionally
<i>Monday 10th</i>			
<i>8am</i>	<i>Mug of tea (2 sugars)</i>	<i>Tired</i>	<i>Irritable</i>
<i>10am</i>	<i>Biscuits, Tea</i>	<i>Tired</i>	<i>Anxious, unable to concentrate</i>
<i>1pm</i>	<i>Cheese sandwich, crisps, coke</i>	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Anxious</i>

## The importance of routine

Trying to develop a regular routine can help to give structure and focus to your day. Eating at regular intervals is essential to maintain energy and blood sugar levels.

You could start by writing a shopping list and planning your meals and snacks for the week. Try to work towards having 3 main meals per day with small snacks in between.

Below is an example of a schedule that you may want to use, or make up your own to suit your own lifestyle and body clock.

Time of Day	Meal / Snack	What You Eat
8am	Breakfast	Porridge
10.30am	Morning snack	oatcakes and a smoothie
12.30pm	Lunch	Tuna sandwich, apple, yogurt
3.30pm	Afternoon snack	Banana and a drink
7pm	Evening Meal	Chicken breast, mixed vegetables and potatoes
9pm	Evening snack	Boiled egg with slice of toast

## Here are some ideas that you might like to try for snacks:

- For a sweet tooth try a small bag of dried fruit and nuts, a yoghurt or a banana.
- Chopped melon or pineapple (tinned is fine also).
- Whizzing up fruit smoothies is a great way to get energy and work towards 5 a day.
- Try oat cakes or rice cakes as an alternative to sugary biscuits
- Eating a slow release carbohydrate food such as porridge an hour before bed can help you to get to sleep

Can you think of any other snacks that you could keep with you?





## Friendly Food

Making changes can be fun and easy if you involve friends and family. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Sit down together for dinner. It may sound simple – but it’s not often that we sit down together in our households to eat. It’s a good time to share and catch up with what’s been going on in each other’s lives.
- Next time you go out for the day, take a packed lunch or a picnic along. It’s cheap, convenient and fun. If you’re in the park, take along some - games to play as well.
- Get the kids cooking! Invite some of your kid’s friends around for a fun cooking session, at the end of which they can sit together and eat their creations (whilst you do the cleaning up!).
- Get out and about – find out where your local markets are and when they run, is there a fruit and veg van in your area? Can you visit a Farmer’s markets for ideas?
- Is there a food and mood group running in your area that you could join? Some local colleges and adult education centres run cookery classes that you can take.

Do you have any ideas about other ways you can make eating more sociable? Note them down here:



## Top Tips

To help you get started, here are some top tips and comments, all of which have been kindly suggested by the staff and volunteers at the HARP Café, a community café run by users of mental health services in Manchester. Try them out for yourself.

- “Chop up carrot and cucumber into sticks to snack on through the day”
- “I fill up 2 bottles with water and carry them with me through the day to drink. I feel much more healthy.”
- “You get a nice natural feeling from drinking water”
- “I cook fish in my steamer. It makes it really easy, just put it in, sprinkle with some herbs and it’s done”.
- “Using a steamer is a really healthy way to cook food, and you can throw just about anything in there – meat, potatoes, rice – it’s easy!.”
- “Cook some pasta, and then stir in some tinned tomatoes and tuna. Sprinkle with cheese and bake in the oven ‘til it melts.”
- “I carry seeds with me to snack on – sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are really nice.”
- “When I cook I make a big batch. Then put some in containers and freeze it so I have a stock of meals ready made”.





# Stepping Stones

Write below the changes or steps you think that you could make. Hopefully this booklet has given you some ideas that you might like to use or you could think of some of your own.

**Over the next week...**



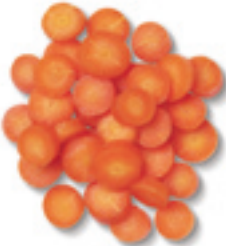
**Over the next month...**



**Over the next 6 months...**



**Beyond this...**



A large rectangular area defined by a dashed orange border, intended for writing notes or reflections.



## Added Bonuses!

There are other benefits of moving towards a healthier diet. It can:

- **Prevent and treat certain diseases.** Your diet may prevent the risk of developing certain diseases such as cancer and heart disease. It is also helpful in treating diabetes and high blood pressure. Following a healthy diet may also reduce symptoms and may help you better manage an illness.
- **Feel energetic and manage your weight.** A healthy diet may also make you feel better, provide you with more energy, and help you fight stress. Teamed with regular exercise it's a winning combination to manage your weight.
- **Enjoy life.** Food is an important part of social and cultural events. Not only does it provide nutrition, but it can bring people together. Cooking fresh, healthy meals can also be an enjoyable way to spend time, either on your own or with others.



## Further reading

Food and Mood Handbook (2001)  
Amanda Geary ISBN: 0007114230

Healing Without Freud or Prozac (2004)  
David Servan-Schreibe ISBN: 1-4050-6718-7

The Omega 3 Connection: The Groundbreaking Omega 3 Antidepression  
Diet and Brain Program (2002)  
Stoll, A.L. ISBN: 0684871394

Visit your local Health Information Point located in public libraries in  
Manchester.



## Some useful contacts

- Samaritans 0845 790 90 90 (24 hours every day)
- MIND Information line 0161 272 8205
- Crisiline 0808 808 2007 (8pm—12midnight every day)
- Crisipoint 0161 839 50 30 (Crisis accommodation / daytime support)
- 42nd Street 0161 832 0170 (for young people: Mon, Tues, Fri 10.30am—5pm. Wed & Thu 1.30pm—5pm)
- NHS Direct 0845 46 47 (24 hours every day)
- Self Help Services (a range of self help groups including food & mood group) and the National Phobics Society (info & advice about anxiety, panic and phobias) 0161 232 7312
- Eating Disorders Association  
Adult line: 0845 634 1414 (Mon-Fri 8.30am to 8.30pm, Sat 1-4pm)  
Youthline: 0845 634 7650 (Mon – Fri 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Sat 1-4.30pm)
- Diabetes UK Careline 0845 120 2960 (Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm includes translation service)
- Heart Information line 0845 0 70 80 70 Mon-Fri (9am to 5pm)

## Some useful websites:

**[www.mentalhealthinmanchester.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthinmanchester.org.uk)**  
**[www.manchesterpublichealthdevelopment.org](http://www.manchesterpublichealthdevelopment.org)**  
**[www.mind-in-manchester.org.uk](http://www.mind-in-manchester.org.uk)**  
**[www.selfhelpservices.org.uk](http://www.selfhelpservices.org.uk)**  
**[www.edauk.com](http://www.edauk.com) (Eating Disorders Association UK)**  
**[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)**  
**[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk) (British Heart Foundation)**  
**[www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)**  
**[www.foodandmood.org.uk](http://www.foodandmood.org.uk)**  
**[www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)**  
**[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)**

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