

## Food and Mood

### ***GREENS GLORIOUS GREENS!***

Green vegetables are the foods most commonly missing in modern diets. Greens strengthen the blood and respiratory system and are also high-alkaline foods which may be beneficial to people exposed to higher amounts of pollution in urban areas. The alkaline minerals in our bodies are used to neutralize acidic conditions caused by the environment. Green is associated with spring, the time of renewal, refreshment and vital energy. In Traditional Chinese medicine, green is related to the liver, emotional stability and creativity.

Nutritionally, greens are very high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, zinc and vitamins A, C, E and K. They are loaded with fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll and many other micronutrients and phytochemicals. Although choosing organic is recommended, eating non-organic greens is still preferable to not eating any greens at all!

Some of the proven and possible benefits of consuming dark leafy greens are:

- Blood purification
- Improved circulation
- Strengthened immune system
- Promotion of healthy intestinal flora
- Promotion of subtle, light and flexible energy

Broccoli is one option which is very popular among adults and children. Also try to include bok choy, napa cabbage, kale, collards, watercress, mustard greens, broccoli rabe, dandelion and other dark, leafy greens.

### ***WHOLE GRAINS***

Eating a proper diet rich in B vitamins, found in whole grains, can help ward off depression.

Carbohydrates release insulin into the bloodstream to increase levels of tryptophan. This amino acid then has an easier time crossing from the bloodstream to the brain, where it converts into serotonin. Increased levels of serotonin help you relax and also improve sleep, especially if you suffer from insomnia. MayoClinic.com recommends eating complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains, to deal with anxiety. Simple carbohydrates contain sugars that may result in feelings of highs and lows.

Whole grains are an excellent source of nutrition, as they contain essential enzymes, iron, dietary fiber, vitamin E and B-complex vitamins. Because the body absorbs grains slowly, they provide sustained and high-quality energy.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Brown Rice**

Brown rice has all bran layers intact and thus contains all of its naturally present nutrients. These layers of bran act to protect the grain and to help maintain its fatty acids. Brown rice contains the highest amount of B vitamins out of all grains, thus another nutritional source for

balancing mood and fighting depression. Additionally, it contains iron, vitamin E, amino acids, and linoleic acid. Brown rice is high in fiber, extremely low in sodium, and is composed of 80% complex carbohydrates.

- Promotes good digestion
- Quenches thirst
- Balances blood sugar and controls mood swings

### **Quinoa**

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) has the highest nutritional profile and cooks the fastest of all grains. It is an extremely high-energy grain and has been grown and consumed for about 8,000 years on the high plains of the Andes Mountains in South America.

#### **Characteristics**

- Contains all eight amino acids to make it a complete protein
- Has a protein content equal to milk
- High in B vitamins, iron, zinc, potassium, calcium & vitamin E
- Gluten-free; easy to digest
- Ideal food for endurance
- Strengthens the kidneys, heart, and lungs

## ***PROTEIN***

Protein unleashes amino acids as it breaks down in the body after eating. One amino acid from protein, called tyrosine, moves from the bloodstream to the brain, where it increases levels of dopamine and norepinephrine, neurotransmitters that improve mental alertness and help energize you, according to the Franklin Institute. These chemicals increase with certain medications doctors use to help depression patients.

### **Beans**

Beans are a wonderful way to add high-quality, plant-based protein to your diet. They are commonly high in iron, B vitamins, and fiber. They also have great flavor and compliment any dish.

### **Fatty Fish**

A lack of omega-3 fatty acids has been found in people with depression, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center. Certain fish contain plenty of omega-3s, including salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel, halibut and herring

### **Lean Meats**

Protein-rich foods enhance brain function and, since they digest slower than carbohydrate-containing foods, have a mellowing impact on your blood sugar levels. Protein-rich foods, such as lean meats, poultry and low-fat dairy products, are valuable sources of vitamin B12 -- a nutrient that supports a balanced mood and cope with stress.

## ***ENERGETICS OF FOOD***

Traditional Chinese Medicine focuses on using foods to prevent and treat disease. Knowledge of food energetics can help one build a stronger sense of health and well-being by eating different foods that impose different effects. Like the saying, "you are what you eat."

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The principles of macrobiotics involve creating a yin and yang balance in all aspects of life – including the food combinations we choose to eat.

Eating from your own garden or buying your produce from the local farmers’ market will leave you feeling more connected to your home or local community. When you eat seasonal, locally grown produce, the body is more able to maintain balance from the inside out.

It is beneficial to take advantage of cooling fruits and lighter greens in the summertime, when they are at their peak in harvest. ***At the same time, heartier vegetables, such as deeply rooted carrots and squashes, grow more abundantly in the wintertime, and are going to add to the warmth of the body. It’s good to maintain a balance of eating seasonally as well as locally,*** as much as possible, to stay in harmony with the natural order of things.

Quality	Food	Preparation
Grounded Relaxed	Root vegetables Sweet vegetables Meat, fish Beans	Stewing Pressure Cooking Baking
Light Creative Flexible	Leafy greens Wheat, barley, quinoa Fruit Raw foods Chocolate	Boiling Steaming Gas stove cooking
Tense Anxious	Sugar Caffeine Alcohol	Microwave cooking Electric stove cooking Factory farming
Connected Harmonious	Organic foods Whole foods Local foods Brown rice	Home cooking Home gardening