



# Feed your Mood!



***Science has shown us that what we eat can have a major effect on our mood and mental health. In fact, the Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists describe healthy diet and lifestyle factors as “essentially non-negotiable” in the prevention and treatment of mood disorders.***

## *How are diet and mental health connected?*

Diet is a key factor that can influence inflammation. Anti-inflammatory diets are consistently associated with a reduced risk of depression and successfully treating severe clinical depression.

Inflammation (*which is an activation of the immune system*) can arise as a result of things like lack of exercise, stress, poor sleep, smoking and unhealthy diet.

Studies have shown a clear connection between severe mental illness and diets higher in pro-inflammatory foods, such as ultra-processed foods, refined grains, saturated and trans fats, and added sugar. At the same time, these foods have few anti-inflammatory nutrients, like vitamins and minerals, prebiotic fibres, probiotics and omega-3 fatty acids.

## *What kind of diet is best for mental health..?*

Research from across countries, cultures, and populations, have shown that a healthy traditional diet, like a Mediterranean, Scandinavian, or Japanese diet, is associated with a reduced risk of depression and anxiety. Although these diets may seem quite different, they actually have many things in common. They generally include plenty of wholefoods, plant foods, and healthy fats from fish, nuts, seeds and olives.

## *So what can we learn from this?*

Let's steer clear of highly processed foods, manufactured fats, synthetic additives and refined sugars and focus on eating unprocessed fresh local foods! And sharing a healthy meal with friends and family is even better and great for the soul!

Research facts in this article have been provided by Deakin University Food and Mood Centre and Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. Always consult with your health practitioner before commencing any diet.

## The lucky list!

Eat these foods for better brain and mental health...

- Avocados
- Almonds
- Bananas
- Beans
- Brown Rice
- Cashews
- Chia seeds
- Edamame
- Eggs
- Flax seeds
- Hummus
- Leafy greens
- Oranges
- Pumpkin seeds
- Oatmeal
- Strawberries
- Sweet potato
- Salmon
- Tuna
- Walnuts
- Quinoa
- Yoghurt



## Pet therapy

Therapy incorporating animals is on the increase and proving to provide real results! Structured animal assisted therapy in a clinical setting uses dogs or other animals to help people better cope with health problems, such as heart disease, cancer and mental health disorders. We are also seeing less structured activities successfully providing comfort, companionship, and enjoyment to the socially isolated and elderly in residential care settings. No wonder so many people adopted dogs during periods of pandemic isolation – having man’s best friend around tends to instantly lift the mood!

## Hug a Tradie

60% of tradies often have aches and pains because of their job\*! Next month in August is ‘Tradies National Health Month’ so it’s a great opportunity to shine a light on the health and wellbeing of those

working across the trades. How about introducing “a month of stretching”, a focus on “better backs” or maybe reinvigorate “SunSmart activities”. All the non-tradie types will benefit too!

\*Australian Physiotherapy Association