

EATING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Preventing depression through food



MooDFOOD
PREVENTING DEPRESSION THROUGH FOOD



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Your take home insights from research of the MooDFOOD project. Recipes, ideas and tips included

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DID YOU KNOW THAT WHAT WE EAT AND DRINK MAY HELP SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

After extensive research the MoodFOOD project has found that as well as keeping us physically healthy, healthy eating may also support your mental health. It's about what we eat every day, throughout the day. In this booklet we'll take you through the best ways you can make healthyfood choices to support your mental health.



HEALTHY EATING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Most of us know that healthy eating is good for our health as it keeps our weight in check and can help protect us from heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. But did you know healthy eating can also support your mental health? There are no magic foods, quick fix supplements or special diets needed – it's about making healthy choices throughout the day, every day. This is what we call a 'healthy dietary pattern'.

See our 5 top tips to work towards your own healthy dietary pattern:

1. EAT MORE

- **Vegetables & Fruit**
- **Legumes**
- **Fish**



2. CHOOSE

- **Wholegrain breads & cereals**
- **Healthy oils**



3. ENJOY IN MODERATION

- **Poultry**
- **Dairy products**
- **Nuts & eggs**



4. EAT LESS

- **Red & processed meat**



5. TAKE SMALL STEPS TOWARDS POSITIVE CHANGES EVERY DAY



TIP 1. EAT MORE

Vegetables, fruits, legumes and fish are all important parts of a healthy dietary pattern which we should focus on eating more of.

VEGETABLES

Any vegetable is a good vegetable - the more you eat the better! Vegetables are very low in calories and high in vitamins making them the top choice for a mood boosting dietary pattern.

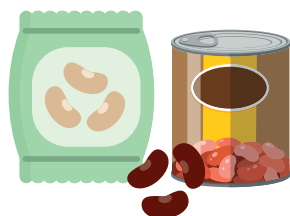


FRUIT

Sweeten up your day with fruit! It's packed with fibre and vitamins and makes a great snack.

FISH

Fish is a great source of protein and vitamins. Its healthy fats mean eating just one serving of fish a week can improve your heart health. Oily fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring and sardines are a great choice as they are packed with healthy omega-3 fats. Aim for at least one serving a week of sustainably sourced fish.



LEGUMES

Lots of people struggle with eating more legumes but there are so many reasons to try. They are cheap, versatile, full of fibre and vitamins, make a great substitute for meat, are great for heart and gut health, and an essential part of a healthy dietary pattern.



WHAT ARE LEGUMES?

Lentils, peas (e.g. chickpeas and split peas like dhal) and beans (e.g. cannellini, soy, kidney, mung, lima and butter beans)

HEALTHY GOALS



- ✓ At least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- ✓ Eat more legumes (e.g. aim for at least 3 servings a week)
- ✓ Eat at least one serving of oily fish a week

TIP 2. MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE

Choosing and eating wholegrain breads and cereals and healthy oils every day is an important part of a healthy dietary pattern.

HEALTHY GOALS



- ✓ Eat wholegrain breads or cereals every day
- ✓ Use healthy oils every day

WHOLEGRAIN BREADS AND CEREALS

You've probably heard about wholegrains before, so why is everyone recommending them? Wholegrain options contain the healthy fibre and nutrients from grains which keeps us feeling full and energised through the day. Here are some easy swaps:



White bread to wholegrain
rye and brown breads



Rice and pasta for wholegrain
pasta and brown rice



Refined cereals for wholegrain
cereals, bran and oats



HEALTHY VEGETABLE OILS

When it comes to fat it's all about choosing the right types of fat. A great way to do this is to swap butter, hard margarines and cooking fats with soft margarines and liquid vegetable oils. Some good choices include olive, rapeseed and sunflower oils. You can use them in cooking and as a dressing for salads.



TIP 3. ENJOY IN MODERATION

Eaten in the right amounts these foods can be part of a healthy dietary pattern.

POULTRY

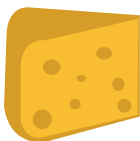
Poultry like chicken and turkey can make a great alternative to red meat. Choose lean cuts and try to serve poultry with lots of vegetables and legumes.



HEALTHY GOALS



- ✓ Eat moderate amounts of poultry
- ✓ Eat a small amount of nuts every day
- ✓ Eat dairy products every day
- ✓ If consuming alcohol, aim to cut back this week



DAIRY PRODUCTS

Dairy products include milk, cheese and yoghurt and make an important part of a healthy dietary pattern. Most dietary guidelines recommend 2 servings of dairy products a day.

NUTS

Delicious and nutritious nuts are full of protein, healthy fats, fibre and nutrients. A small amount each day is a great addition to a healthy dietary pattern.



EGGS

A few eggs a week provide a great source of protein, plus an alternative to red meat.



ALCOHOL

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Aim for less than 14 standard drinks a week. A standard glass of wine or pint of beer contains around 2 standard drinks. Check your national dietary guidelines for more information. The less alcohol you drink, the lower your risk of other diseases such as cancer.

TIP 4. EAT LESS

These foods are not part of a healthy dietary pattern so should be avoided or reduced.

HEALTHY GOALS



- ✓ Eat less red meat
- ✓ Avoid processed meats



CUT BACK ON RED MEAT

Low intake of red meat is a key part of healthy dietary patterns which can improve mental health. Work towards eating less red meat (like beef, lamb, and pork). Great swaps can include eggs, fish, nuts and legumes. Cutting back on meat is great for reducing your risk of cancer and heart disease, and reducing your environmental footprint!

AVOID PROCESSED MEATS

Processed meats are not part of a healthy diet and can increase risk for colorectal cancer.



WHAT IS PROCESSED MEAT?

Meat which has been cured, dried or salted including ham, salami, bacon, pastrami, sausages (including frankfurters and chorizo) and smoked meats.

UNHEALTHY FOODS

While the evidence on the link between unhealthy foods like sugary drinks or sweet, fried and salty foods and depression isn't clear yet - these foods do not form part of a healthy dietary pattern. It's best to limit these foods in line with your national dietary guidelines.





TIP 5. MAKE SMALL HEALTHY CHANGES EVERY DAY

Make a change to feel a change! Any positive change, no matter how small, is a great step towards better health. Here are some tips to get started:

SET SOME HEALTHY GOALS

Eating vegetables at every meal, eating two pieces of fruit a day, trying a new recipe with legumes each week. Setting healthy goals helps to stay motivated and focused.

START WITH POSITIVE FOOD GOALS

The term diet can carry a lot of negative thoughts and behaviours. Start towards a healthier dietary pattern by focusing on the positive's like adding more fruits, vegetables and legumes rather than restricting food.

GAIN INSIGHTS

Keeping a food and mood journal is a great way to gain insights into the link between how you feel and what you eat.

IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS AND PLAN AHEAD

Are there seasons, events or stresses that make you feel low or trigger you to reach for unhealthy foods? By identifying what they are you can plan healthy strategies to help tackle them.

BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

Involve family and friends in reaching your healthy goals, everyone can benefit from working towards a healthy dietary pattern.

BE MINDFUL

Remove distractions, focus on the food and enjoy your mealtimes. They're something to look forward to and savour.

DON'T LET A BAD DAY KEEP YOU DOWN

Missed a goal today? No problems- give it another go tomorrow.



A HEALTHY DAY

A day of healthy eating can include a lot of different foods and meals, below we've put together just some examples of what it might look like.

BREAKFAST



Wholegrain toast
& spread

or



Porridge with fruit

or



Eggs with
wholegrain toast

LUNCH



Salad with legumes

or



Sandwiches packed
with vegetables

or



Minestrone soup

DINNER



Bean Stew

or



Chicken with grains
and vegetables

or



Fish and
vegetables

SNACKS



DRINKS



GET STARTED

To help you work towards a healthy dietary pattern we've made the healthy checklist below. Choose 3 healthy goals to work on and keep track over the week. You can also make notes of your mood, any triggers you identify or challenges you face, and then reflect on the lessons you've learned and achievements you've made each week.

WEEK 1

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Mood notes	Challenges & Triggers	Lessons & Achievements
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
Thu						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						



YOU CAN DO IT!

The first step is always the hardest, you'll be amazed at what you can achieve!

WEEK 2

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Mood notes	Challenges & Triggers	Lessons & Achievements
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
Thu						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						



INGREDIENTS



- 1 cup butternut squash, chopped
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 cup brown lentils
- 2 cups of chopped mixed vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, sweet potato, spring onion)
- 1 red onion, slice in half moons
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 400g can chopped tomato
- 4 sundried tomatoes, finely chopped
- 2- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp thyme
- 1 tsp red pepper powder/paprika
- Salt and Pepper to taste

VEGETABLE AND BEAN STEW

Healthy Eating on a Budget.

This warming stew will help you boost your vegetable and legume intake to reach your goals, plus it's cheap to make!

Serves 4

Method

STEP 1

Dice and thinly slice 2 cups of vegetables, sundried tomato and garlic

STEP 2

In a deep pot bring lentils to boil in 3 cups of water with a dash of salt. Once boiling – reduce to a simmer for 15 minutes

STEP 3

In a deep pan add oil, garlic and red pepper over a medium heat for 2 minutes. Add all vegetables and stir for 1 minute. Cover and cook for 6 minutes or until vegetables are softened. Add two cups of water, sun dried tomatoes, vegetable stock, lentils (including the lentil cooking water), thyme, paprika and chopped tomatoes. Stir and bring to boil. Reduce to a simmer for 15-20 minutes.

STEP 4

Serve with some wholegrain bread and a dollop of natural yoghurt. Enjoy!



INGREDIENTS



- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 tsp fresh oregano (or ½ tsp oregano)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 700g chopped tomatoes (or 2 400g cans of chopped plum tomatoes)

FOUR WAYS TO HEALTH: TOMATO SAUCE

Just one sauce can boost your vegetable intake in four meals!

Method

STEP 1

Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions, oregano, garlic and salt. Cook while stirring often for 10 minutes (until onions are soft).

STEP 2

Add tomato paste and continue cooking for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and stir constantly until the mixture comes to a boil. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer for 1 hour, stirring every 5 minutes.

STEP 3

Serve and enjoy! Serve the tomato sauce over eggs or mixed with white beans and mushrooms for breakfast, use it as a sauce with wholegrain pasta for lunch or use it as a delicious and nutritious sauce to serve with fish.

INGREDIENTS



- 1 400g can chickpeas (or 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas)
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup tahini
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt to taste



HEALTHY HUMMUS

Hummus is a great way to boost your legume intake – plus it tastes great with vegetables

Method

STEP 1

Combine tahini and lemon juice in a food processor and blend for 1 minute.

STEP 2

Add olive oil, garlic and salt and process for one minute (tip: scrape the bottom and sides to make sure everything is mixed)

STEP 3

Add chickpeas and process for 2 minutes until the hummus is thick and smooth.

STEP 4

Bon appetite! Serve your hummus as a snack with fresh vegetables or as a spread in your sandwich.

GO GREEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

A healthy dietary pattern to support your mental health can also help you reduce your environmental footprint. Here are some top tips to help your mental health and the environment:

HEALTHY GOALS

- ✓ *Don't eat too much*
- ✓ *Eat more seasonal fruit and vegetables*
- ✓ *Swap red meat for legumes and vegetables*
- ✓ *Eat sustainably sourced fish in moderation*

EAT AND PREPARE A HEALTHY AMOUNT OF FOOD

Eating a healthy amount of food can help you maintain or achieve a healthy body weight and reduce food waste.

EAT LESS RED MEAT

Meat has a greatest impact on the environment compared to all other foods. That's why it's so important to cut back. Poultry has a lower environmental footprint than red meats.

MAKE SMART FISH CHOICES

With global fish stocks at risk it's very important to choose sustainably sourced options. Fish can also have a large environmental footprint due to the fishing and transport requirements so it's also important to eat fish in moderation, aim for two servings a week with at least one of oily fish.

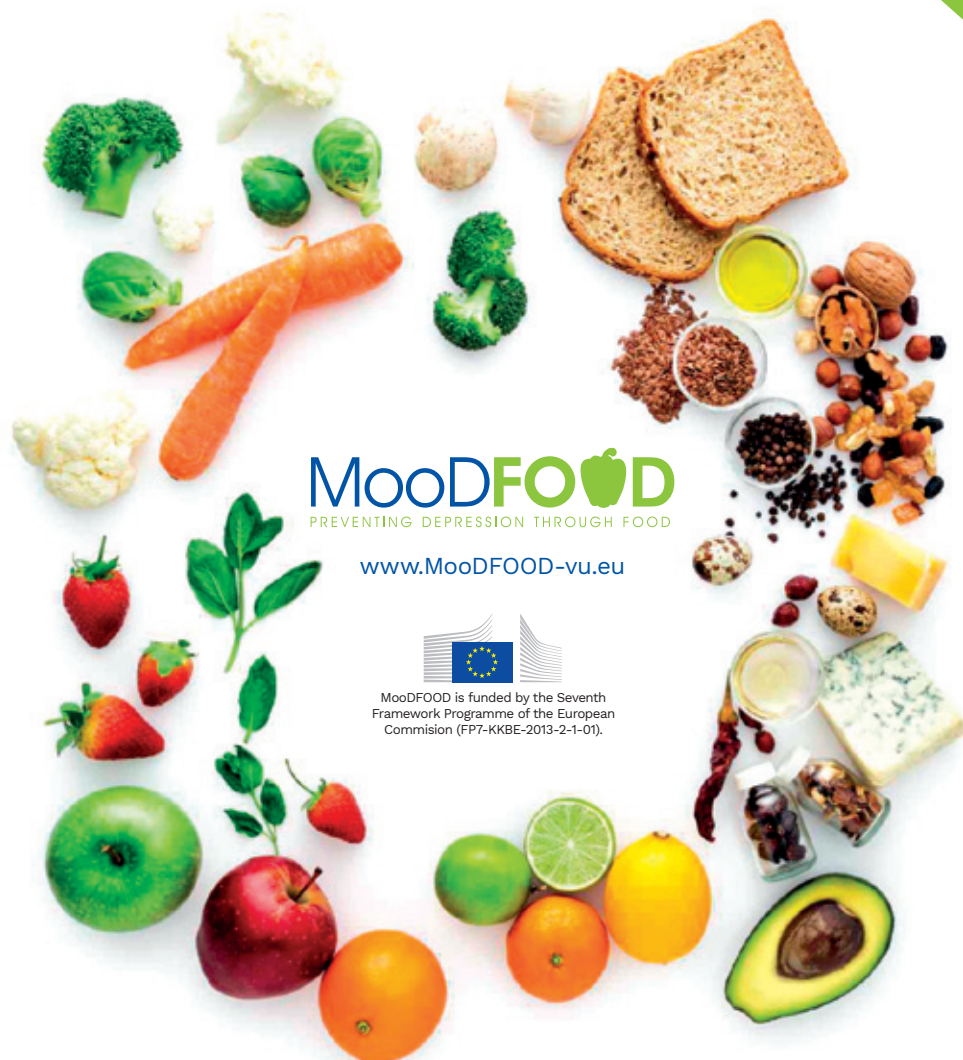
Seafood is also a great choice.

LOAD UP ON PLANTS FOODS

Fruit, vegetables and legumes are all crucial for a healthy dietary pattern - and also have a lower environmental footprint than meat and dairy products. Look for options that are environmentally friendly like tasty seasonal fruits and vegetables, field grown tomatoes and frozen fruits and vegetables that cut down on food waste.

REACH OUT

If you're feeling down and finding it hard to shift negative feelings you don't have to struggle alone. It's important to seek help. While a healthy dietary pattern may help, it's just one part of the treatment package. Mental health care professionals can help you navigate your symptoms and get the care you need. Talk to your doctor about how you're feeling and they'll be able to refer you to the right services. For more information visit www.MoodFOOD-vu.eu



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