



Wellbeing Information & Tips

Ed. 10. 16th July 2020

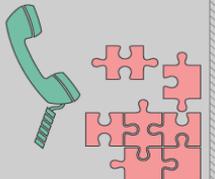
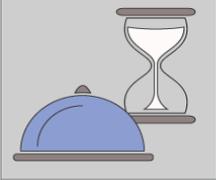
Food & Mood

We have long been aware of the impact that poor diet can have on our physical health – however we don't always consider the impact it can have on our mental health. Unhealthy diet and poor eating habits have recently become more of an issue for some people, due to the dramatic change of lifestyle that we have experienced since COVID-19.

An increase in poor snacking habits have been reported which can often involve the sweet stuff. Did you know that when the body is stressed it produces too much cortisol which makes us more likely to over eat and crave foods that are high in fat and sugar? And although sugar and caffeine may pick us up at the time, the “crash” that comes with them are very problematic for our mood.

We like this image from the BBC about how to snack less during lockdown.

How to snack less while in lockdown

		
Drink more water or herbal tea	Distract yourself with a game or call a friend	Do some quick exercise; at home or outside
		
Plan to cook proper meals and take time to enjoy	Plan your shop and don't stock unhealthy foods	Know your cravings and prepare healthy snacks

BBC

Please note, we tend not to cover issues and advice on the effects of alcohol in our material on food and mood as we prefer to signpost to our specialist local partners. If you would like more information and support around alcohol consumption, please get in touch with [Change Grow Live](#) which provides support to people across Sussex who experience challenges as a result of drug and alcohol use.

If you find yourself struggling with your mental health, eating the right foods and keeping properly hydrated can make a significant difference to your mood and your longer-term mental health.

A few ideas for you to try to help improve and manage your food and mood...

- Water!! If there is one tip you try this week - **focus on water!** Water is vital to our wellbeing. When we are dehydrated it can make us feel tired, anxious and stressed. A useful tip to remind yourself to keep drinking, is to fill up a litre bottle of water and keep it with you throughout the day. If you don't like the taste of plain water, try adding a slice of lemon, lime or a couple of mint leaves
- Familiarise yourself with the [NHS Eat Well plate](#), and get into the healthy habit of preparing and **eating balanced meals**. Try out a Mediterranean style diet for the summer! Studies have found that a diet high in fruits, vegetables, beans and pulses, fish and unsaturated fats such as olive oil, led to a reduction in depression among participants.
- Try cooking the "**Mind Meal**" consisting of a main course, side dish and desert all designed to combine a range of proteins, omega 3 fats, vitamins and wholegrains whilst being low in sugar, caffeine and additives
- If you experience anxiety try **restricting your caffeine intake**, particularly coffee, tea and fizzy drinks or switch to decaf versions. Caffeine is a stimulant, so it can make you feel anxious, depressed and disturb your sleep. However, it is important to note you can experience withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly.
- Have a go at keeping a **food diary** relating to your mood. A good example of how to start can be found through the Mental Health Foundation [here](#).
- And if you fancy learning a new dish and incorporating ingredients that are good for your mental health, check out local **community kitchens** for **online resources** and courses including for example the [Brighton and Hove Food Partnership](#). [NHS One You](#) has lots of great recipes and tips too.

Take a look on our [website](#) for more information about the connection between food and mood.

We will continue to bring you tips, initiatives and ideas so please keep an eye out!

Next edition: 30th July

