



This month we're focusing on eating to improve your mental well-being. We've provided resources and information to help you (and your family) find foods that boost your mood.

Eating to improve your mental well-being

Smart food choices can help ward off symptoms of depression. A diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, beans and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids can help improve your mental well-being. Your brain and nervous system depend on nutrition to build new proteins, cells and tissues. In order to function effectively, your body requires a variety of carbohydrates, proteins and minerals.

Foods that boost your mood

- **Fatty Fish:** Rich in omega-3s, fatty fish, such as salmon and tuna, contribute to the fluidity of your brain's cell membrane and appear to play key roles in brain development and cell signaling.
- **Dark Chocolate:** It's rich in compounds that increase the feel-good chemicals in your brain.
- **Fermented Foods:** Rich in probiotics, foods like kimchi, yogurt, kefir, kombucha, and sauerkraut support gut health. Since up to 90% of your body's serotonin is produced in your gut, a healthy gut may correspond to a good mood.
- **Nuts and Seeds:** Provide tryptophan, an amino acid responsible for producing mood-boosting serotonin. Almonds, cashews, peanuts, and walnuts, as well as pumpkin, sesame, and sunflower seeds, are excellent sources.
- **Beans and Lentils:** An excellent source of B vitamins, which help improve mood by increasing levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, and gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA), all of which are important for regulating mood.
- **Coffee:** The caffeine in coffee prevents a naturally occurring compound called adenosine from attaching to brain receptors that promote tiredness, therefore increasing alertness and attention. It also increases the release of mood-boosting neurotransmitters.
- **Berries:** Pack a wide range of antioxidants and phenolic compounds, which play a key role in combatting oxidative stress.



Resources on mental health:

- [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)

Recipes to Boost Your Mood:

Roasted Salmon with Fresh Herbs

Ingredients:

- 2 lemons
- 8-10 parsley sprigs
- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 whole skin-on salmon (~2 lbs.)
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
- 1 tbsp chives, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Slice 1 lemon into thin slices, the second lemon into wedges.
3. Place the lemon slices in the center of a large sheet pan.
4. Top with parsley sprigs & drizzle with 1 tsp of olive oil.
5. Place fish, skin side down, on top of seasoned lemon slices.
6. Drizzle fish with remaining 1 tsp of olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
7. Roast 15-20 minutes, or until the salmon reaches internal temperature of 145 degrees.
8. Top with fresh herbs & serve with lemon wedges.

Other Fatty Fish Ideas

Albacore Tuna

fresh or canned, make a tuna salad

Atlantic Herring

try it pickled

Anchovies

add to a tomato sauce for more flavor

Sardines

add to your pizza

Trout

frozen or fresh

Alaska Pollock (walleye)

try it baked vs fried

Trail Mix

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup raw pecans
- ¾ cup raw cashews
- ½ cup raw sunflower seeds
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup unsweetened, unsulfured cherries
- ½ cup unsweetened raisins
- ½ cup chopped 82% dark chocolate
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg

Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.
2. Store in a Ziploc bag or mason jar.
3. Will keep for up to 1 month.



Instant Pot Brown Sugar Baked Beans

Ingredients:

- 1 yellow onion, finely diced
- 15.5 oz. (~1 ¾ cup) each, rinsed and drained
 - kidney beans
 - pinto beans
 - northern beans
- ½ cup ketchup
- ¾ cup water
- ⅓ cup dark brown sugar, unpacked
- 1 tbsp yellow mustard
- 1 tsp chili powder



Instant Pot Instructions:

1. Add ingredients to instant pot and stir together well.
2. Attach lid and set to manual, high pressure, for 8 minutes.
3. Once finished, natural pressure release for about 10-15 minutes, then quick release.
4. Stir before serving.

Slow Cooker Instructions:

1. Add ingredients to slow cooker and stir together well.
2. Cover and cook low 6 to 7 hours. Stir before serving.