

NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

Food and Mood



How does food affect our mood?

The food we eat contains nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, fat, and vitamins and minerals. These nutrients provide the building blocks for neurotransmitters, or the chemical messengers that help your brain communicate with the rest of your body. Eating a balanced diet helps make the neurotransmitters we need for optimal mood, energy, sleep, memory, and mental focus.

Foods to Include...	Effect on Mood...	Try this...
Whole grains such as whole grain bread or tortillas, brown rice, quinoa, oats.	Whole grains are an example of complex carbohydrates. These digest more slowly and provide the brain with long-lasting energy to prevent mood swings.	Make mini pizzas using whole grain naan or pita bread.
Unsaturated fats such as fish (e.g. salmon, trout, etc.), avocado, ground flaxseed, chia seeds, edamame, canola or olive oil.	The fats we eat directly affect the structure of the brain cell membrane. Eating unsaturated fats keep the brain flexible and help it work more rapidly.	Add 1-2 Tbsp ground flaxseed or chia seeds to cereal or oatmeal, Greek yogurt or smoothies.
Plant-based protein such as beans and lentils, nuts and seeds or lean cuts of meat such as chicken and fish.	When we eat foods that contain protein, our body breaks down the protein into amino acids that help form neurotransmitters that affect our mood. For example, tyrosine is an amino acid found in fish that helps form the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine helps us feel motivated and happy.	Use canned salmon or tuna to make fish cakes for an easy, high protein lunch or snack.

Disclaimer: Some recipes or food suggestions may not be suitable for people with allergies. Please check with your local school to identify foods that are acceptable or unacceptable in the classroom.

Baked Salmon Patties

Ingredients

- 2 cans (213 g) salmon, well drained and flaked with a fork
- ½ lemon, juiced (~2 Tbsp)
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh dill, chopped (or 1 tsp dried dill)
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup bread crumbs



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly spray with olive oil.
2. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients together. Form 8 patties using hands or an ice cream scoop and transfer to baking sheet. Use your hands or back of a spoon to flatten to ½ inch thick.
3. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from oven, flip and bake for 10 more minutes until golden brown.

Tips on getting the kids involved:

- Help flake the salmon once drained
- Squeeze juice from the lemon once sliced
- Measure dill, mustard, salt, pepper and bread crumbs
- Mix ingredients together
- Help form the patties using an ice cream scoop

**** Refer to the Allergy Newsletter (September issue) for substitution ideas.**

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

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