

# Topic of the Week

Issue 2, March 2010

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

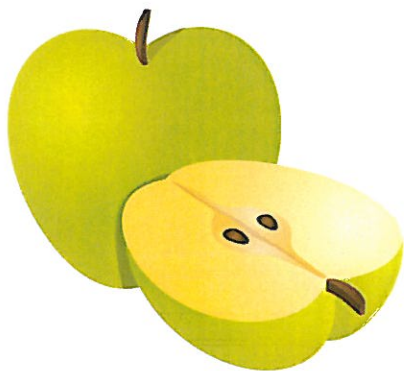
## Food and Your Mood

Presented by: Fox Valley Chiropractic

Most of us underestimate how food can affect our moods. The brain reacts quickly to food - both good and bad - fed into your body.

Although you may feel sugary candy gives your mood a lift, you expose yourself to erratic fluctuations in your blood sugar levels. After the "sugar rush" effect wears off, your mood worsens. Caffeine is not much better, as it eventually makes you feel jittery and anxious. A better approach is to feed your brain the right nutrients so you can expect good moods to consistently dominate over bad moods.

Eating right does take some time and planning. Unfortunately, in our rushed, stress-filled lives, we frequently turn to quick fixes like fast food. But these quickie meals are often nutrient deficient and heavy with ingredients that make you feel sluggish.



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## Nutrition for Brain Health

To understand how food affects your moods, you need to understand neurotransmitters. These are chemicals that send messages between nerves in your brain. Neurotransmitters are vital players when it comes to mood; they're sensitive to what nutrients are circulating in your body. When your neurotransmitters are out of sync, you feel depression, anxiety and irritability.

The best way to start your day in a good mood is to eat breakfast. Taking the time to enjoy a morning meal pays off for hours. It boosts your metabolism and keeps your moods stable. The best choice is to have both wholesome carbohydrates and protein.

Select carbohydrates like fruits and whole grain products. Fruits that are lower in sugar are the best option; these include berries, apple, and kiwi. If you're not able to get these fresh or in season, choose frozen fruit (canned fruit often contains sugary syrup). And choose whole grain breads over highly-refined baked products.

## Exercise of the Week

Lumbar stabilization (stage 2)  
Plank Position

Difficulty: Moderate

*(Consult your chiropractor before engaging this or any other exercise.)*

**Start:** Lie down on stomach. Then, begin by propping upper body up onto elbows/forearms, with hands together in prayer position. Engage inner abdominal muscles by bringing belly button inward. Keeping spine steady, lift hips and knees so you're resting on toes, creating a straight line from ankles to shoulders.

**Exercise:** Keeping spine steady, bend one leg to 90 degrees. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 1) If this is relatively easy, try lifting leg higher, and hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 2) Switch legs, and repeat. Perform 3-5 sets of this exercise per side. Be careful not to strain lower back.



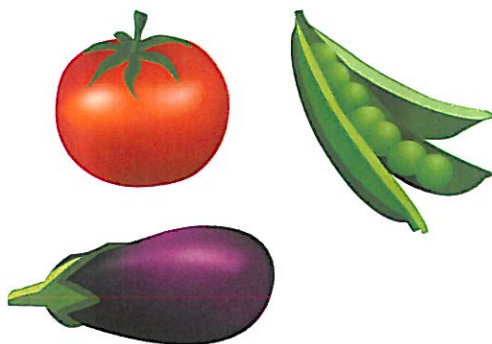
Be sure to include some protein with all your meals, as it stabilizes blood sugar, reduces mood swings and creates energy. Protein also provides many of the building blocks for the creation of neurotransmitters. Good sources are fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, soy and nuts. Stay away from deep fried protein goods.

To help keep the pounds off, use breakfast as your main meal of the day and opt for lighter lunches and dinner with a couple of nutritious snacks in between.

Vegetables that are low in starch and high in fiber are excellent sources of brain nutrients. Try spinach, kale, tomatoes, asparagus, cucumber, carrots and cauliflower. Fresh vegetables are better than frozen, but frozen is better than canned.

In the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (Nov. 2009), a year-long research study showed that those who followed a low fat, high carbohydrate diet had consistent improvement in mood compared to those who consumed a low-carbohydrate, high-fat diet.<sup>1</sup>

When cooking food, opt for olive oil or macadamia nut oil. Stress can cause inflammation in your body. These oils are filled with oleic acids which are anti-inflammatory compounds.



When it comes to fluids, avoid sugary and caffeine-heavy beverages. Try green tea, hot or iced. Although it does have some caffeine, green tea also contains L-theanine, an amino acid which contributes to calm feelings. Chamomile is a popular herbal tea that provides a mild, calming sedative effect as well.

And don't forget to drink plenty of water. Keeping your body well hydrated keeps you from feeling tired and irritable.

## When You Can't Always Eat Right

Sure, there are going to be some days when your schedule prevents you from eating right. To help keep your mood on an even keel and to round out any nutritional deficiencies, you should take a good quality multivitamin every day. If you're a moody person, you may want to include a B-complex supplement that includes 25 to 50 milligrams of the B vitamins, which play an important role in neurological health. You should also consider using an omega fatty acids supplement. Fatty acids also play an important role in keeping your brain fit.

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Do you often suffer low moods? Look closely at your daily diet. And talk to your chiropractor, who can provide with you nutritional advice on improving your mood and your overall health!



## Quote of the Week

"Health is my expected heaven."  
- John Keats

For more health tips, visit online  
[www.citruspie.com](http://www.citruspie.com)



## References and Sources:

1. Long-term Effects of a Very Low-Carbohydrate Diet and a Low-Fat Diet on Mood and Cognitive Function – *Arch Intern Med.* 2009;169(20):1873-1880.

Jack Challem, *The Food Mood Solution*, John Wiley & Sons, 2007



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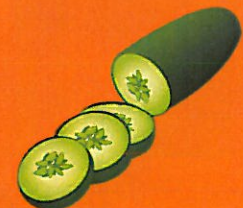
newsletters are written and designed by  
**Mediadoc**  
exclusively for its chiropractic clients.

Writer/Editor: David Coyne

Writer: Dr. Christian Guenette, DC

Design: Elena Zhukova

Photos: Fred Goldstein



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