

In this month's newsletter: YOUR MIND AND MOOD

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### Quote for February 2006

*"To insure good health: eat nature based foods, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life".  
Adapted from a quote by William Londen*

### Foods that Affect your Mind and Mood

Food affects your mind and mood, surprised!

### THE DRUG PROZAC

Just think about it, over the past 30 years the rate of depression and anxiety has increased enormously. In Australia alone depression is the most debilitating and expensive illness, costing the community in excess of \$3 billion a year. One in five Australians (and you can bet it will be much the same in other western societies) have some form of mental illness and around 6% suffer serious depression. Since 1990 antidepressant prescriptions have skyrocketed. The explanation for this huge increase is; PROZAC.

Prozac is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). It works by preventing the brain from reabsorbing serotonin, a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in the regulation of mood.

### THE BRAIN CHEMICALS THAT AFFECT YOUR MOODS

There are three main chemical neurotransmitters in the brain which help send messages from one cell to the next. They are dopamine, noradrenalin and serotonin. Dopamine and noradrenalin are the brain chemicals that keep us alert; they have a tendency to make us think more quickly and they increase motivation, mental acuity and productivity. Serotonin on the other hand is the calming brain chemical; it produces a relaxed, more focused, less anxious, less stressed, more euphoric feeling. Levels of these neurotransmitters are directly related to the foods we eat.

### THE FOODS THAT AFFECT YOUR BRAIN CHEMICALS

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to choose your mood, knowing what changes the chemicals in the brain may be a key to doing this; *proteins* – such as meat,

fish, eggs, fresh shelled nuts, yogurt, cheese and legumes – cause an increase in the brain chemicals for alertness (dopamine and noradrenaline), while *carbohydrates* – such as wheat, rye, millet, oats, rice, bread, pasta and starchy vegetables – cause an increase in the brain-calming chemical, serotonin.

### THE CHEMICALS THAT AFFECT YOUR FOOD

But it's not as simple as that, the problem I believe and I have no scientific proof except anecdotal is that the food we eat today is so vastly different from the food we ate 30 years ago. Our foods are technologically changed to create foods that have never existed in the food chain before. And most of us eat them without really knowing it. Therefore I believe by eating technology driven foods like margarine, artificial sweeteners, powdered potato, powdered egg, additives, preservatives, flavouring to name just a few then you change the affect food has on your mood. But go back to nature based foods and food just might be one of the powerful weapons against mental illness

### CHANGE THE FOOD YOU EAT AND YOU MAY CHANGE YOUR MOOD

By knowing what foods affect your mood and by eating nature based food, combined with exercise and a great attitude I believe we can start to combat the increasing depression and anxiety that plagues our modern, convenient society.

AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER YOU WILL FIND A  
COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF HOW FOODS AFFECT YOUR MOOD AND  
HOW YOU CAN USE THIS KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

### DVD OF THE MONTH

WHOLE BRAIN WORKOUT - [www.wholebrainworkout.com.au](http://www.wholebrainworkout.com.au)

Food is not only important for your own mental state but also that of your children. Good food especially good fats are important in brain development and activity. There are a plethora of children failing in the education system and the DVD Wholebrain workout is a Program that has been put together by Denise Smith to assist families with their children who struggle in the current education system.

The Wholebrain workout looks at 10 factors; exercise, phonics, understanding learning differences, positive attitude, positive parenting, diet, water, oxygen, sleep and music. The DVD has a fun way to warm up the brain ready to learn along with other necessary tools and strategies to help parents and children cope within the education system.

I highly recommend this wholistic program to help both you and your children survive the school years.

### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Cancer is a disease that is growing at a phenomenal rate. There is a debate that the lack B17 could be a link in the growing cancer rate. Even if it is a debate I think it would be prudent to eat foods that have B17. Sadly not many foods are high in B17. But luckily one of my favourite foods is sago or tapioca has B17 present. So here is a yummy recipe that can give you the edge.

### Lemon Sago Pudding

1/2 cup Sago  
Juice of 2 organic lemons  
1 tsp lemon zest  
4 tablespoons of golden syrup  
4 tablespoons of rapadura sugar  
2 1/3 cup of filtered water

1. Combine sago and water in a saucepan and boil until translucent stirring occasionally
2. Remove from stove and add the rest of the ingredients
3. Mix well; pour into mould and leave to set.
2. Serve with fresh fruit.

### Choose Your Mood by Choosing Your Food

#### Calming Carbohydrates

All carbohydrates are not equal in their ability to offer mood-altering results. The best way to consume carbohydrates is in the form of whole grains and complex carbohydrates. Oats, millet, cracked wheat, buckwheat and rice are prime examples. Whole grains are broken down over long period of time, keeping a constant flow of serotonin in our body. To experience the maximum effect of carbohydrates on your mood, it is important to eat them without any protein.

#### Peppy Proteins

If you're feeling sluggish, protein power can produce the effects you want. Protein encourages the production of dopamine and noradrenalin, which produces alertness, mental energy and faster reaction time. The effects from eating protein last about 2-3 hours. To maximize the "arousal" effect of a protein meal, limit the intake of fat and carbohydrates. It is important to not eat protein for several hours before bedtime or you may experience difficulty falling asleep.

#### Neutral Fruit and Vegetables

Most fruits and vegetables are mood-neutral foods, so you can consume them without them affecting your mood. So if you're feeling the way you want to feel, a meal of fruit or a healthy salad might be the best option.

#### Sabotaging Fatty Foods

As for fatty foods, they cause havoc with moods. An overburden of fats means digestion overload, causing a large portion of blood flow to leave the brain and be shunted to the digestive tract to help with the digestion and absorption, thus causing a condition I call “brain fag”. The brain simply stops working at peak efficiency and goes into slow mode, causing tiredness, forgetfulness, lack of concentration and all other mind confusing, unwanted feelings. (By the way a very large indulgent meal will also give the same symptoms.)

### Antagonising Alcohol

Difficulty walking, blurred vision, slurred speech, slowed reaction times, impaired memory; clearly, alcohol affects the brain and our moods. Alcoholism destroys the brain but current research shows that moderate alcohol consumption increases blood flow to the brain, which seems to be showing a link to improved mental function. The results of the research show some specificity in the association between alcohol consumption and cognitive ability. Research at University College London has found that those who drink only one glass of wine a week have significantly sharper thought processes than teetotallers.

### Exhilarating Caffeine

While caffeine is an addictive drug it can also be a very useful tool for changing moods and states of alertness. Scientists have developed various theories to explain caffeine’s wake-promoting and mind-altering power; it seems to interfere with the chemical adenosine, which is a natural sleeping pill made by the body. Caffeine has been shown to enhance mood and increase alertness; in moderate amounts it’s potent for athletes, students, brainstorming committees and the like. Used wisely, and not as an hourly pick-me-up, caffeine taken as tea or coffee can alter brain performance and be a very useful tool.

### Outstanding Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids found in oily fish like salmon and mackerel can help starve off depression. Recent research has revealed that Omega-3 is excellent for improving concentration and energy levels.

### Helpful Herbs

Herbs have been used for centuries, not only for flavour in cooking but as natural remedies too. Ginger can lift the spirit, cinnamon counteracts exhaustion, camomile helps with nervous tension, while peppermint can be taken to help calm nerves and relieve anger. Basil is thought to clarify the mind, so try a large batch of pesto stirred through pasta to get your mind ready for some serious thinking.

### Vital Vitamins and Minerals

B Vitamins play an important role in brain function. B6 helps to convert tryptophan into serotonin, vitamin B1 helps build and maintain healthy brain cells and folic acid is also an essential brain food. Zinc is a mineral that helps keep the senses sharp as well as encouraging a healthy immune system; it is critical for proper growth and development of the nervous system.

### Stimulating Sunlight

The sun inhibits a hormone in the brain called melatonin. This hormone creates calmness in the brain and gets the body and mind ready for sleep. It is a hormone that is needed at night so when the sun goes down the hormone is produced, but during the day, exposure to sunlight will help keep melatonin at bay and enhance the alert state of the brain.

### Using these Principles of Food Mind Mood Connection

#### Sports Performance

While the peak performance of the physical body is important for athletes, many times the mind is the edge that makes the difference. Using the foods which cause alertness in the brain can make all the difference between winning and losing.

#### Insomnia

If you are someone who finds it hard to sleep at night, to help improve your sleep patterns, it would be beneficial to have protein for lunch and carbohydrates for dinner. Stop drinking all caffeine drinks at midday and don't eat any protein after lunch and see what a difference it makes when your brain is calmed down.

#### Business Lunches

If you want the upper hand at a business meeting then eat smart. To keep your brain sharp and alert it is important to stick to the food mind mood principle. Two basic rules are: eat very little fat and eat your protein first. So a good business lunch would be: a clear soup (hold the bread and butter), then fish (without sauce) and a salad and steamed vegetables (hold the alcohol). For dessert have fruit salad; sorry, no cake or puddings. Watch what your lunch partner eats and see who has the upper hand by the end of the meal.

#### Seminars, Conferences and Meetings

Sitting down listening to a speaker can sometimes become tiring. Usually, during the morning sessions most people are alert and full of questions, but after lunch, the yawns start and the heads start to nod. The food that is offered at lunch is often starchy, full of breads, cheeses and other foods that cause drowsiness. My suggestion is, at morning tea don't touch the sweet pastries; just have a cup of coffee and some fruit if they are on offer. Then at lunch choose one type of meat and the salad, with coffee and fruit again for

afternoon tea... Using this strategy should make a difference by keeping you alert all day, allowing the brain to take in the information needed.

With this awareness of the Food-Mind-Mood Connection, you can use your food as a powerful tool to enhance performance in all areas of life, from improving sports performance to helping with insomnia and having the edge in business meetings. Parents can also use these principles to help children manage their busy lives.