

FOOD and Your MOOD

Step 1: Observe how certain foods affect your mood (both negatively and positively).

Negative examples:

- Soda and sugary snacks might make you feel tired and irritable.
- Heavy, fatty foods (e.g., french fries, potato chips, fried chicken, greasy foods) might make you feel sluggish.
- Caffeine might make you feel jittery and more anxious and interfere with your sleep.

Positive examples:

- Complex carbohydrates and fiber (e.g., sweet potatoes, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, whole-grain cereals, salads) give you slow and steady energy.
- Proteins (e.g., lean meats and poultry, beans, nuts, fish, eggs) also provide your body with steady energy that helps you stay active and strong both physically and mentally.
- Dairy foods (e.g., low-fat milks, cheeses, yogurts) have protein and calcium, which help with energy and bone strength.
- Fruits and vegetables provide you energy, boost your health, and give you a sweet or crunchy treat without zapping your energy or making you feel guilty.
- Once you know what foods make up a balanced diet, you can determine what changes might be needed.

Step 2: Notice whether you are eating too much or too little.

Step 3: Start thinking about changes.

How can you begin to increase the amount of healthy foods you eat? Keep track of your food choices in a food diary every day so you see your progress!

(continued)

Step 4: Start small.

Don't try to make dramatic changes to your diet all at once. You may feel overwhelmed, which might set yourself up to fail. Start slowly and gradually to change your habits.

For example:

- Cut down on processed foods and add more fresh foods.
- Add more fruits and vegetables to meals and have them for snacks.
- Add lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and onion to sandwiches.
- Add fruit to cereal.

Step 5: Notice the effects of eating well on your mood.