



## EATING FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

### ***Don't Skip Meals:***

- Eating at regular intervals throughout the day provides your body and brain with a steady fuel supply.
- Eating regularly also prevents blood sugar drops, which can cause irritability, nervousness and lack of focus.

### ***Make Your Snacks Count:***

- Pack healthy snacks so you can keep up your energy and prevent getting overly hungry, which can make it difficult to resist bad food choices.
- Good healthy snack choices can include nuts, dried or whole fruit or other portable foods.

### ***Keep Your Diet Balanced:***

- Your brain, as well as your body, needs a healthy supply of carbohydrates, proteins and fats to perform the functions that can affect your mood and thinking.

### ***Choose the Right Carbs:***

- Carbohydrates can increase the release of serotonin, which can create a relaxing feeling. However, sweets can cause a rise and fall of blood sugar levels, leaving you feeling sluggish.
- Choose healthy carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits and vegetables that enter your bloodstream more slowly and can keep you more evenly energized.

### ***Choose the Right Fats:***

- To function properly, your brain needs a steady blood flow.
- Saturated and trans fats can narrow your blood vessels, so limit your intake of red meat, butter, whole milk and baked goods.
- Choose healthy fats when possible found in fish, olive oil, avocados and nuts.

### ***Nutrients that May Help Combat Depression:***

**Vitamin B12:** Found in fish, salmon, chicken, meat, fortified breakfast cereals.

**Folate:** Found in dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, Swiss chard, etc), almonds, dairy and fortified breakfast cereals.

**Omega 3 Fatty Acids:** Found in fatty fish such as salmon, tuna and mackerel as well as walnuts and fortified eggs.

**Various Antioxidants:** Different types found in different foods such as berries, spinach and members of the cabbage family (broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, arugula).

([www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net))

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