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Change your Mood with Food

A Special Report by Dr. Leslie Korn

5 essentials to lift your spirits and keep them there

In my work with thousands of clients all around the world, the same questions come up time and again:

How do I lift my mood?

How do I increase my energy, and feel productive and stable throughout the day?

I know I shouldn't eat so much sugar and caffeine but I can't stop!

Tell me how and I will do it!

I feel cranky a lot of the time. What can I do?

I know how to solve these problems, but first,

WHICH OF THESE APPLY TO YOU?

I wake up tired but am wired at night.

My mood goes up and down throughout the day.

I get cranky and irritable at least twice a day.

I crave sweet foods and starches.

I use caffeine (coffee, tea, or chocolate) for energy during the day.

If you answered yes to any of these statements, you are a candidate to change your mood with food.

In this special report, I am going to share with you 5 essential actions that are guaranteed to change your life and well-being.



HINT

The degree to which you follow these tips will be the degree of change you experience.



FACT

Where there is mental and physical distress there is poor diet.

1. Learn to recognize - Mood follows food

There is no doubt that nutrition affects mental health. Poor nutrition leads to and exacerbates mental illness. Optimal nutrition prevents and treats mental illness. Note the word “optimal.” One’s diet cannot be just “good” or provide the basics to survive; it must be nutrient dense and tailored to the needs of the individual who may have been missing the basic ingredients for optimal brain function since life in the womb.

Where there is mental illness, there is poor diet. Where there is mental illness, there is a long history of digestive problems. By adding the lens of nutrition, diet, and digestion to your clinical toolbox, you will forever change your approach to client care and enhance the efficacy of all your other methods.

2. Give up the SAD diet

The standard American diet (SAD) makes us sad! This too frequently prescribed diet consists of overly processed foods containing refined sugars in fruit juices and sugary drinks, and highly refined rice, pastas, and flours used in breads and bakery goods. These processed products are loaded with chemicals and synthetic preservatives, hormones, antibiotics, and food colorings that are known to alter our mood. This type of diet is a prime contributing factor resulting in health complaints for many clients. The SAD leads to chronic inflammatory states and sets the stage for neurotransmitter imbalances.

Much of it is “fake food” with dozens of chemical ingredients created in the laboratory and not in nature. Such so-called “foods” are designed to survive on the shelf for months at a time—thus reducing costs to the manufacturers. The SAD diet makes us SAD because it does not provide the nutrients our brain and body need to function well. That some of us survive (though rarely thrive) on a SAD diet is just the luck of the draw. Illness comes invariably. For some people it happens in childhood, and for some not until middle age. But you can count on it, just as a car without the right fuel eventually sputters to a stop.

3. It's not YOU - it's the food you're eating

Without reducing the intake of refined carbohydrates such as sugar, balancing mood will remain out of reach for the mood-disordered, and one may never know why. Hypoglycemia refers to low blood glucose, which is often associated with poor adrenal function. People under stress are vulnerable to functional or reactive hypoglycemia because stress negatively affects the regulation of blood glucose. Most patients who do not eat a healthy diet and binge on carbohydrates have hypoglycemia and do not know it. Many vegetarians experience it, since they often do not consume enough proteins to stabilize their blood sugar. This syndrome causes mood swings and inattention, which is often misidentified as the rapid cycling of bipolar disorder or ADHD.

 **FACT** Where there is distress there is a history of digestive problems.

4. Give up the refined sugar and restore your focus

Sugar overwhelms the body by robbing it of nutrients and causing inflammation. Aspartame is a commonly used alternative to sugar, but is known to have side effects. Individuals with mood disorders are particularly sensitive to aspartame, and aspartame makes depression worse (Walton, Hudak, & Green-Waite, 1993).

Best Sugar Alternatives

Stevia is a plant indigenous to South America; it is a hundred times sweeter than sugar and has been shown to reduce blood sugar (Curi et al., 1986). It is available both as a liquid and as a powder. While the powdered form of stevia can tend to leave a bitter aftertaste, the liquid form does not. Either form can be used in drinks or food preparation.

Xylitol is another sweetener without side effects. It was first extracted from birch trees and provides a healthy sweet taste that does not raise blood glucose levels or negatively affect dental health.

5. Eat like your ancestors!

Discovering your ancestral nutrition and eating like one's ancestors did is a foundation for restoring health. For most people, this will mean a diet rich in whole foods such as humanely raised, wild and grass-fed animals that have not been given antibiotics or hormones; seafood, including sea vegetables; raw and cooked vegetables and fruits; cold-processed (virgin) fats from nuts and seeds that are stored in dark-colored glass containers; legumes; and for those who are not allergic, dairy and grains.

Most people will do well with a combination of raw and cooked foods. Cooked foods are easier to digest, so begin slowly with adding raw foods if you have not been eating them. It is easy to ensure a range of nutrients from foods if you select foods from the whole color spectrum. The yellows and oranges of sweet potatoes and carrots provide beta carotene, which converts to vitamin A to protect the immune system; they also provide a natural sweet food alternative to sugar. The reds and purples of berries, figs, and grapes offer antioxidants called anthocyanins, which can reduce brain inflammation. The red peppers and tomatoes have vitamin C, and greens provide chlorophyll, the “blood of plants.”

Chlorophyll is similar to heme—the constituent of hemoglobin that transports oxygen; the only difference is that it has a magnesium molecule (instead of the iron found in hemoglobin), making it a potent source of energy and detoxification for blood cells. Both raw and lightly cooked dark greens are essential to health.

But don't overdo the cruciferous vegetables, like kale. In large quantities, they can depress thyroid function. “White” foods, like garlic and onions, are high in sulfur, which is a detoxifier and mood elevator, antibacterial, and antifungal.

Many food co-ops and farmer's markets offer free “food” tours and classes about the produce in the stores. I encourage my clients to join these tours not only to learn, but to reduce isolation and loneliness and to meet kindred spirits on the path to health.



Hi, I'm Dr. Leslie Korn, a Harvard Medical School-trained behavioral medicine doctor and natural medicine clinician specializing in integrative approaches to treating the mind and body. I combine the science of medicine along with the art of compassionate personalized care.

For more information about improving your mood and overall health NATURALLY, check out my book,

**Nutrition Essentials for Mental Health:
A Complete Guide to the Food-Mood Connection.**

And stayed tuned for more great tips on **my blog**.
Reach me at drleslie@protonmail.com

Mocha Mood Smoothie

This is my favorite morning or afternoon guilt-free “pick-me-up” It is anti-inflammatory, rich in antioxidants, and provides brain food in the form of the trinity of cognitive function: coffee, cocoa, and coconut. If you prefer, you can substitute organic decaffeinated coffee or just use cocoa when serving to children, replacing the liquid from the coffee with extra coconut milk.

Make sure your ingredients are organic and sugar-free.



Ingredients:

- 12 ounces fresh brewed organic coffee, hot
- ½ cup full-fat, unsweetened coconut milk
- 2–5 drops liquid stevia (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened organic cocoa powder (for drinking)
- Vanilla (optional)
- Coconut cream, unsweetened (optional)

Directions: Combine all ingredients in a blender at medium speed for a few minutes until frothy. Pour into a mug and top with coconut cream, if desired.