



when your mood goes south

If you have days when you feel down and blue, you're not alone. Our fast-paced, modern lifestyle can easily zap energy levels.

A recent report—"Changing Diets, Changing Minds"—from the UK highlights the growing problem in the area of mind, mood, and well-being, which industrialized countries face. It reports a 20-fold increase in depression since 1945.

Apart from a breakdown in traditional social networks and relationships, financial stresses, and increased work hours, our diets have changed over the last 50 years. We eat less fresh, local produce and more refined and processed foods that hide unwanted sugars, fats, and additives. And yet, what we feed ourselves can make a world of difference to how our brain functions and how we feel.

5 ways to lift your mood

1. Have a good breakfast every day.

It will refuel your brain, lift your mood, and lower stress levels. Breakfast is brain food!

2. Include foods rich in B vitamins.

These include whole-grain breads and high-fiber breakfast cereals, green leafy vegetables, soybeans and other legumes, sunflower seeds, and low-fat

dairy or B₁₂-fortified soy milk. Vitamin B₁₂, and folate in particular, can assist with low mood and depression.

3. Include foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids to make you happy. Although a vegetarian diet is always desirable, try salmon (if personally acceptable), linseeds, walnuts, or omega-3 enriched eggs.

The type of fats you eat can have a profound effect on your brain function since 50 percent of the brain is made up of fat! The cells that transmit signals in the brain are unusually rich in omega-3 fats, meaning this fat is really important. Yet depressed people have low levels in the body.

4. Drink plenty of water. Aim for at least eight glasses daily. Dehydration causes fatigue and is sometimes mistaken for hunger. Adequate water is needed to keep brain cells functioning optimally.

5. Activate yourself. Walk daily to boost your self-esteem, distract yourself from negative thought processes, and help you sleep better.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.