



Mandurah

Psychological Services



Bunbury

Psychological Services

Your EAP Team



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Food for Thought!

We all know the things we eat are important to our physical health, but what you may not know is our diet plays a huge role in our mental health as well.

More and more research is showing us how important the food we eat is, and how our foods can impact our mood. This edition of our newsletter will be focusing on diet and its relationship to our mental wellbeing.

If you believe you are struggling with your mental health or wellbeing, please consult with your GP or contact us here at Mandurah & Bunbury Psychological Services for an appointment with one of our qualified practitioners who will guide you towards better management of your mental health.

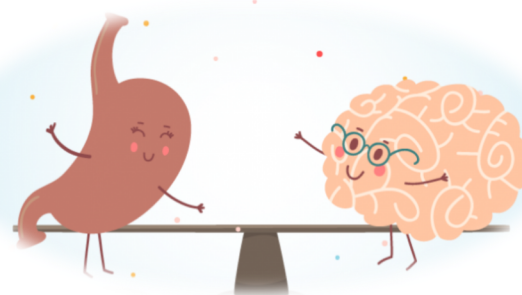
A Bite-Sized Look at the Research

Food fuels both body and mind. We eat nutritious foods so that our bodies can grow, repair, and function well. Our brain needs nutritious foods too. In fact, it's quite hungry – the brain accounts for around 20% of our total daily energy requirements.



Following a healthy pattern of eating is linked with better stress management, improved sleep quality, increased concentration, and better general mental wellbeing. Just as our food choices affect our physical and mental wellbeing, the opposite is also true – we're more likely to follow a healthy diet when we're in a good headspace.

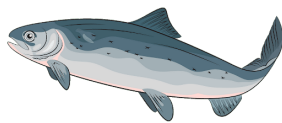
Serotonin is a brain chemical that helps regulate sleep, appetite, and mood. The majority of Serotonin is created in our gut. It makes sense that the gut isn't just for digesting food, but also digesting moods. The production of Serotonin in the gut is influenced by gut-bacteria which is influenced by the types of foods we eat!



We Are What We Eat!

Vitamins and Minerals to look out for:

- **B vitamins.** People with low B12 levels have more brain inflammation and higher rates of depression and dementia. Falling short on folate has long been linked to low moods.
- **Iron.** Too little iron in the blood has been linked to depression, as well as fatigue and low energy levels.
- **Omega-3s.** These healthy fatty acids can improve thinking, memory and, concentration.
- **Zinc.** This nutrient helps control the body's response to stress. A great source is oysters. Mussels are also a good choice, which are rich in brain-healthy selenium.



Some things to consider:

- Food is a source of comfort for most of us, but this can become an unhelpful habit. It's good to develop coping strategies that are not related to food - like exercise or mindfulness.
- Foods that help our brain function well are fruits and vegetables, foods high in fibre (wholegrain cereals and bread, beans, chickpeas, lentils and nuts), yogurt, olive oil, and fish (tinned is fine).
- Make small changes that are easy to stick to. Start by swapping an unhealthy afternoon snack for a healthy one, like a piece of fruit.
- A burger or a chocolate bar are fine every now and then. But it's important to make sure your diet includes a variety of nutritious foods.



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