Diet Recommendations\*

What we eat can really impact how we feel physically and therefore emotionally. Fatigue is very closely linked to depression. What and when you eat can determine hours later whether your brain is calm or in fight or flight. Think of eating as fueling your brain. Below is the best diet for mental health.

At every meal, include:

(1) **Protein** – Benefits of eating protein thru the day: stable energy, stable mood, better sleep, less fatigue in afternoons (esp if you eat protein-rich breakfast), lower depression/anxiety, increased metabolism, less frequent hunger. Sources of protein include eggs, nuts, meat, soy, seeds, fish, dairy+, beans, and whey protein powder.

(2) **Fiber (fruit or vegetable) –** Fiber prevents glucose from spiking. Need 4-6 c. of fruits and veggies/day**.** Eating veggies gets you fiber and tons of vitamins.

(3) **Carbohydrates** – Best carbs are veggies, whole and ancient grains, whole fruits, and dark thick breads. If you don’t get enough carbs/glucose in your food, your brain will take glucose from your liver and release adrenaline which leads to irritability and anxiety. Stable glucose = stable energy/mood.
(4) **Healthy fats –** Benefits of healthy fats: lower depression and anxiety, lower joint pain, improve PMS, decrease weight gain and acne. Fats that support health are veggies (nuts, avocados, coconut oil), fish oils (cod, salmon, krill), egg yolks (esp good for depression), organic butter, grass-fed animal products. Types of unhealthy/inflammatory fats: shortening, hydrogenated oils, non-lean meats, non-organic butter, fried foods, sugar, and alcohol (alcohol is immediately converted to fat when it hits the liver). Fat is theprimary fuel for muscles, regulates the body, cues satiety. For best health try not to consume too many carbs when consuming fats (ie, bacon with eggs is good, bacon with pancakes isn’t).

Notes:
-- **Other foods to consume:** probiotic food (yogurt, pickles), spices, water (1/3 of body weight in oz/day), Drinking enough water throughout the day gives you more energy at the end of the day, decreases headaches, and improves bowel function.
-- Make sure your favorite **treats** are in your diet! 1.5oz of dark chocolate eaten consistently midday results in less binge eating at night.
-- Eat **within an hour of waking up** –balances blood sugar, prevents crashes and cravings later in the day.
-- Pay attention to **portion size** and going back for seconds – if your view of food is skewed, look to those of similar age/build/activity level who seem to have a healthy relationship with food. What do their portions look like?
-- **Decrease sugar and snacks** like chips, cookies, soda – this will decrease inflammation in the body and cravings.
-- **Minimize caffeine** – a cup or 2 of coffee max – and watch what you add to your coffee.

Supplement Recommendations\*

**Methylated Multivitamin** – I like Life Extension Two-Per-Day
**Fish oil** for brain health and sleep – I like Nordic Naturals, lemon flavored (doesn’t need refrigeration) and Barlean’s (needs to be refrigerated). Take at night for sleep improvement.
**Melatonin** for sleep – tablets come in all sorts of dosing, so pay attention to which you buy. Try to use the lowest dose possible. I like Natrol dissolvable tablets. This doesn’t take the place of good sleep hygiene!
**Magnesium Glycinate** for just about every function in our bodies including sleep, muscle cramps, heart health, and headaches, but also mental health support – 400-800 mg at night
**Sam-E** for decreasing depression and pain. Recommended dosing is 200mg on an empty stomach before breakfast and before lunch.
**Methylated B Complex** for energy production and healthy metabolism – I like Life Extension BioActive Complete B Complex or Dr. Mercola’s B Complex
**Inositol** – It’s a B vitamin that helps tremendously with mood support. It is typically found in a flavorless powder that you can add to a drink or smoothie. The dosing for mood is high and if you have a sensitive stomach you may not be able to tolerate it. The dosing is 12-18 grams/day.
**Probiotic/Prebiotic** for gut health, brain support, and decrease in inflammation – I like DNA Shift
**Tumeric/Curcumin** for decrease in inflammation – I like BioSchwartz
**Vitamin D** is vital for mental and physical health – most of us have low Vitamin D, especially in the winter.
**Vitamin C**, **Zinc**, and **CoQ10** to keep from getting sick

Movement Recommendations\*

What sort of **movement** do you enjoy? Walking? Pilates? Lifting weights? Swimming? Stretching? Dancing (turn up the music and close the blinds if it makes you self-conscious)? Playing outside with kids? Gardening? Playing with your dog in the yard? Do ***that*** for exercise if you’re trying to start a routine, and commit to doing it a certain number of days a week. Once you have that down, add another day, lengthen the amount of time you do it, or add a different activity. The biggest things are to get moving and for it to be something you enjoy.

Muscle mass is key to supporting mental health. Muscle mass protects us against diabetes and dementia bc our muscles are metabolizing the glucose keeping cortisol and adrenaline down.

\*I am not a medical doctor. This is based on my own research, coursework, and experience. Please consult your physician before beginning any supplements, diet changes, and exercise routines.
+ Decrease dairy if having trouble with inflammation/pain/skin rashes.