

Food & Mood



Throughout the colder Vermont months, many of us seek ways to support our mental health and lighten our mood (pun intended considering the sun sets at 4:30pm). The foods and beverages we consume, and the patterns in which we consume them, have an impact on our mood throughout the day. We would be remiss if we did not recognize that mood is highly complex and sometimes dependent on factors outside of our control. What we consume is a mere ingredient in the recipe that is your mood. Additionally, we must recognize that everyone has varying degrees of access to nutritious food. All that said, here are some simple tips for nourishing your mind and body:

- **Maintain predictable patterns.**

Food is comprised of literal energy for your body, so it's no surprise that eating regularly (every 2-3 hours) and predictably gives you sustained energy throughout the day.

- **Add complexity to those carbohydrates (yes, enjoy the carbs).**

We're all about enjoying a variety of foods including leftover holiday cookies, however complex carbohydrates that contain more fiber support energy and mood in a way that simple carbohydrates do not.

- **Infuse your plate with color (to counteract the gray outside).**

We hear it all the time – plants this and plant-based that! Research shows that all the chatter is likely correct. Colorful plants, each offering their own profile of valuable nutrients, are key to mind body harmony.

- **Balance your beverages with nonalcoholic, noncaffeinated options.**

Statistics show that we have a tendency to consume more alcohol during the colder months, and who doesn't enjoy a hot cup of coffee on a snowy morning? Our brains benefit from moderate intake of alcohol and caffeine, balanced with hydrating nonalcoholic and noncaffeinated options.

Sources:

[Diet and Depression](#), Harvard Health Publishing, 2020

[Dietary Patterns and Depression Risk: A meta-analysis](#), Psychiatry Research, 2017

[Hazards of Holiday Drinking](#), American Psychiatric Association, 2023