Welcome to Week 11

Food and mood

Did you know that what you eat can affect how you feel? The minerals and vitamins which are contained in our food enter our bloodstream and are carried right around our body including our brains. We all know this if you think about it. If you have been rushing around grabbing junk food you probably are feeling tired and lethargic. You may also feel bad tempered and on edge. Just settling down and eating well can put you back on a good track very quickly.

Here is a quick guide what you can eat to change the way your mood.

**Foods to eat**

Brazil nuts, meat, ﬁsh, eggs contain selenium (this lifts mood and prevents depression)

Liver, green vegetables, citrus fruits, beans contain folates which lift depression

Red meat, ﬁsh contain Iron which combats lethargy

Dark green leafy vegetables and dairy products contain Vitamin B which combats irritability

Nuts and seeds contain Magnesium which helps produce serotonin the brain chemicals which will make you feel happy and relaxed

Eggs, oily ﬁsh contain Acetylcholine which increases sharpness of thinking

Cottage cheese, chicken, turkey, oats, tuna contain Tryptophan which produces serotonin and melatonin increasing feelings of happiness

Whole grains contain carbohydrates which sharpen thinking.

**Foods to avoid**

Coﬀee, and cola contain caﬀeine which can increase irritability and headaches

Alcohol can lead to depression

White ﬂour can lead to unstable blood sugars making you feel tired

Sugar can lead to unstable blood sugars making you feel tired

**What to do**

So keep an eye on your mood. Once you have started to be aware that how and what you eat will affect how you feel you can begin to be your own food doctor. So eat well and be happy.

If you would like to know more the mental health charity Mind has an excellent publication The Mind Guide to Food and Mood which you can download

https://www.mind.org.uk/media/7498/mind-guide-to-food-and-mood-2010.pdf



The hunger scale

We live in a very strange world when it comes to eating. Most of us are surrounded with food more or less all the time. This is a very unusual situation which has only existed for a few decades. Even after the 2nd World War it would have been strange for people to snack between meals. And go back much before that and many people were actually hungry a lot of the time.

Now, a lot us eat so often that we are never hungry. I have even had clients who got into a panic at the thought of not being able to constantly access food. And never being hungry makes us fat.

So how do we get back in touch with our natural appetite so we can eat when we are hungry and stop when we are full. And the thing about eating in this pattern is for most people all you need to do. As long as you then eat natural healthy foods your body weight will stabilise at a healthy level.

Here is a little hunger scale to help you.

Never get so hungry that you feel

Faint or even desperate to eat.

You should start eating when you are quite hungry but no ravenous. Then eat healthy foods, plenty of fresh vegetables and some lean protein. Remember to keep an eye on your portion sizes. You should eat slowly and chew your food well and drink water with your food. Take time with your food, remember that it takes time for your stomach to send the message you your brain that you are full.

You should stop eating when you feel just full. Never eat until you feel overly full or bloated.

It may take you a bit of time to get yourself back into sync with your system but after a week to 10 days you should be getting some awareness of how it feels to eat well, just enough for you.