

Top 3 things you should be doing to boost your mood and keep spirits high

As the devastating COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll consider trying these 3 moods boosting foods and activities.



Vit D

Although you can be deficient in Vitamin D at any age, your risk increases as the years go by, and your body becomes less efficient at making Vitamin D and using it. Especially in Northern climates this is such an important vitamin to be including each day.

Vit D not only is needed for good moods, it helps your immunity, lowers inflammation, bad cholesterol, helps bone density and more. Many parts of the brain, including those involved with depression, contain receptors for Vitamin D. It may increase the available serotonin, the way the SSRIs do.

A simple blood test will help your doctor decide if you need more Vitamin D. Doctors like to see between 30 and 60 nanograms per milliliter of “25- hydroxyvitamin D.” This chemical travels throughout your body, turning into “activated vitamin D,” which helps your cells communicate and manages the calcium in your blood, bones and gut. Sunlight is great for vit. D. 10 minutes in direct sun can give you up to 30,000 IU’s of Vit. D. Supplements can be taken at 5,000 IU’s at a time.

If you decide to get a sunlamp, choose one that emits short-wavelength UVB light, which triggers Vitamin D production. Manufacturer Sperti claims that its Vitamin D Lamp (\$425) is the only one recognized by the Food and Drug Administration for this function. Don’t go to a tanning salon or buy a tanning lamp: your goal isn’t to damage your skin, but to feed your body.



Cashews

Cashews rank among the best plant-based sources of this amino acid (tryptophan). This amino acid plays an important part in the absorption and production of serotonin. A depletion of serotonin can make us feel anxious, stressed, and just downright sad. Tryptophan is found in many plant-based foods, but is incredibly dense in cashews with 1000-2000 milligrams per 1/4 cup serving.

Magnesium is critical to a healthy mood and nervous system, helping treat anxiety and depression as a result. Cashews contain roughly 83 milligrams per serving.

One of niacin's unique properties is its ability to help you naturally relax and get to sleep more rapidly at night. Listen to this story about a woman who was dosed with niacin to fight her depression. Niacin is found in cashews.

Vitamin B6 in cashews helps in the uptake of serotonin in the body and fight a sour or anxious mood along with tryptophan to create a relaxed, zen state.

It aids magnesium to reach body cells more effectively and, in this way, reduces depression and improves overall brain health. The best sources of vitamin B6 include cashews along with avocados, bananas, pumpkin, pumpkin seeds, greens, chia, and sweet potatoes.

Theoretically, vitamin B6 is a cofactor in the tryptophan-serotonin pathway, and thus, low levels of it cause depression. It's also significant to the metabolism of protein, fat, and carbohydrates and the creation of red blood cells and neurotransmitters.



Exercise

Running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour reduces the risk of major depression and can boost mood. Moving in general is the key here. Little movements each day can add up as well. Combining your activity with other things can help keep you motivated. Running with friends, listening to music or an audio book while exercise can be enticing and keep you going.

Last thing, a healthy diet is helps with everything. Lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, fermented foods, and if you eat meat fatty fish. It takes planning to consistently eat healthy. Do some meal and grocery planning. Prep meals and have things to look forward to.