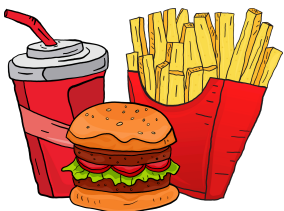# Nutrition and Mental Health

What is the relationship between nutrition and mental health?

The consumption of processed foods has been linked to mental health conditions since they lack the essential nutrients needed for optimal brain function. Additionally, soil erosion has lowered the nutrient content of fruits and vegetables, further affecting one's mental well-being.

Prolonged imbalanced eating can cause stress-related damage throughout the body which is related to weight gain, reduced blood flow to the brain, and mental health issues.

Cortisol is a hormone that is released to help the body manage stress. An imbalanced diet or disordered eating can increase cortisol levels, potentially leading to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Food insecurity can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, due to the stress and worry about accessing safe and nutritious food.

Nutrition and Mental Health

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Which foods and nutrients support mental health?
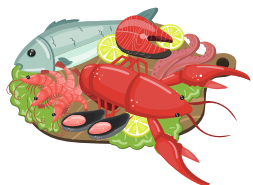
Seafood   **Nuts and seeds**   **Spinach**

Omega 3 Fatty Acids: found in the tissues of the brain and nervous system

Leafy greens   **Beans**   **Whole grains**

Folate: helps make serotonin and help supports brain energy
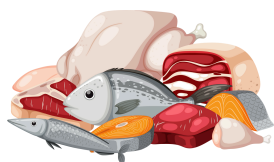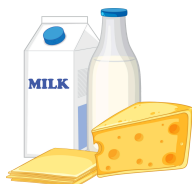
Meat and seafood   **Milk and cheese**   **Eggs**

Vitamin B12: helps make brain chemicals and supports nerve health

Nuts and seeds   **Avocado**   **Spinach**

Vitamin E: protects brain cells from damage
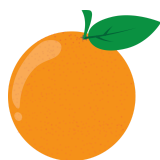
Citrus fruits   **Broccoli**   **Kiwi**

Vitamin C: supports brain health and helps produce hormones such as dopamine and norepinephrine
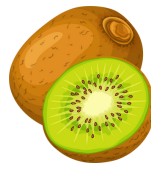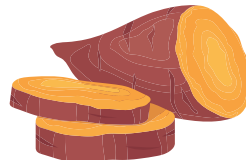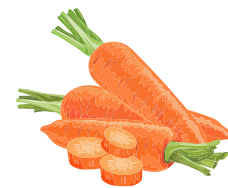
Sweet Potato   **Carrots**   **Broccoli**

Vitamin A: works with hormones that affect mood and emotional balance