PURSUIT

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Florida Blue BetterYou

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

Food for thought: how diet impacts mental health

When we think about healthy eating, we usually focus on how it helps our bodies. But food can also have a big impact on our minds. Research has found eating a healthy diet can help keep our minds healthy and support mental well-being.



The gut-brain connection and inflammation

Did you know that your gut and brain talk to each other? What you eat can affect the chemicals in your brain that control your mood, hunger, and sleep. Eating whole foods, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help good bacteria in your gut grow. This can lead to better mental health. On the other hand, some foods can cause inflammation in your body. Chronic inflammation is linked to mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. By choosing the right foods, you can support your mental health and well-being.

Foods that support mental health

- Fatty fish (salmon, sardines) for omega-3s and brain health
- Leafy greens (spinach, kale) for antioxidants and gut health
- Berries (blueberries, raspberries) for antioxidants and inflammation reduction
- Nuts and seeds (walnuts, chia seeds) for healthy fats and gut health
- Fermented foods (yogurt, kimchi) for probiotics and gut health
- Whole grains (brown rice, quinoa) for B vitamins and fiber

Foods to limit or avoid

- Processed meats, like hot dogs and sausages
- Refined carbohydrates, such as white bread and pasta
- Fried foods and foods high in saturated and trans fats
- Sugary drinks and foods high in added sugars

Nourish your mind and body

- Eat at consistent times to maintain blood sugar levels and prevent hunger and irritability
- Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated and focused
- Focus on a balanced diet with a variety of whole foods

Have more questions about making food choices that could lift your mood and support your overall health? Join us for our next Ask the Dietitian webinar on May 6, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. ET.

Resource: Health.Harvard.edu; Healthline.com

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Connected care at your fingertips

Digital health uses technology to improve care, diagnosis, and wellness. It includes tools like electronic health records (EHRs), telemedicine platforms, mobile health apps, and wearable devices. You can use these tools to stay more connected to and monitor your physical and mental health. This can include:

- Telemedicine - virtual doctor visits from home
- Electronic Health Records - secure, online access to your medical history anytime
- Mobile health apps - tracking fitness, medication, mental well-being, or health conditions
- Wearable devices - monitoring vital signs, activity levels, or sleep patterns

Benefits of digital health

These tools can help you take a more active role in your health and make better-informed decisions. You can expect:

- Increased access to health care from home or on the go
- Improved involvement in managing your health
- Better care coordination between health care providers
- Enhanced health outcomes through condition management and prevention



Digital health has the potential to change how your health care is delivered and experienced. To learn more about digital mental health apps, join us for a live webinar May 21, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. ET.

Resources: FDA.gov; meQ

Garlic Roasted Salmon and Brussels Sprouts (Serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 14 large cloves garlic, divided
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh oregano, divided
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided
- 6 cups Brussels sprouts, trimmed and sliced
- ¾ cup white wine, preferably chardonnay
- 2 pounds wild-caught salmon fillet, skinned, cut into 6 portions
- Lemon wedges

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Mince 2 garlic cloves and combine in a small bowl with oil, 1 tablespoon oregano, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Halve the remaining garlic and toss with Brussels sprouts and 3 tablespoons of the seasoned oil in a large roasting pan. Roast, stirring once, for 15 minutes. Add wine to the remaining oil mixture. Remove the pan from oven, stir the vegetables and place salmon on top. Drizzle with the wine



mixture. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon oregano and 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Bake until the salmon is just cooked through, 5 to 10 minutes more. Serve with lemon wedges.

Recipe courtesy of Eatingwell.com; for nutritional information click here.

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