Eat These Foods to STOP Anxiety, Depression & Insomnia Transcript

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Introduction to food and mood

Did you know that the foods you eat can either trigger or tame stress, anxiety, depression, and even insomnia? Yes, you have the power to control your mood and mental well-being by simply making better choices of the food you You see, your brain is an incredibly complex organ and it's constantly communicating with the rest of your body.

What you put on your plate directly affects how well it functions and how you feel. Today, I'm going to share six powerful foods that can help you fight against depression, stress, anxiety, as well as insomnia.

Hello, I'm Dr. Uman Naidu, your Mood Food Expert, and welcome to my channel. I am a nutritional psychiatrist, a chef, an author, nutritional biologist, at Harvard Medical School, where I have dedicated my career to understanding the incredible connection between food and mental health.

As a nutritional psychiatrist, I blend my knowledge of medicine, nutrition, and the culinary arts to guide people toward better brain health.

Meet Dr. Uman Naidu and the channel

And that's what I want to help you do today. I'm also a bestselling author of two books that I've published that dive behind the science into mood and food.

On this channel, you'll learn how to harness the power of food to boost your mood, manage stress, enhance focus and even support conditions like anxiety, depression and ADHD.

If you're struggling with any of these issues or simply want to support your brain health, you are in the right place. Let's explore the six foods that can help you regain control of your mood and wellbeing.

Let's start with these foods in no particular order but something that you might enjoy from this list is the one you should start first. The first one I am going to start is salmon and the reason that I have canned salmon here is it is actually a cost effective option for many people.

You see salmon is rich in omega 3 fatty acids especially EPA and DHA which are vital for brain health. Now that is important for your brain, but why?

Salmon for omega-3 brain support

Omega-3s are essential fats that your body can't produce on its own, which means you have to get them from your diet. These fats play a crucial role in building cell membranes in the brain supporting the structure of neurons and ensuring smooth communication between brain cells.

Several studies have shown that individuals with higher omega- 3 intake have a lower risk of developing depression. In fact, a study published in the Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience found that Omega-3 supplementation significantly reduced symptoms of anxiety in individuals diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder.

Not only do these healthy fats help reduce inflammation in brain, but they also support serotonin production, which is often referred to as our feel-good hormone.

This means that by including salmon in your meals two to three times a week that you're trying to give your brain the best brain fuel it needs to combat stress and stabilize your mood.

The second food is dark chocolate. Extra dark natural chocolate, not a candy bar. I'm sorry. Yes, I know this feels like much of a treat, but there's solid science behind extra dark, natural, chocolate which contains a group of antioxidants called flavonoids, which have been shown to improve the blood flow to the brain reducing inflammation and oxidative stress.

Oxidative Stress occurs when there's an imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants in your body, which causes damage to your brain cells over time.

Dark chocolate for mood and stress relief

But here's where it gets interesting. Dark chocolate stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals that create feelings of pleasure and boost serotonin levels.

which helps improve your overall mood. Remember, good serotonin levels will give you the feeling of a good mood! Dark chocolate also contains magnesium, which has been shown to help with the relaxation response.

and relieve stress. A study published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology found that participants who consumed dark chocolate reported feeling calmer and more content.

So enjoying a small, square, extra dark natural chocolate with at least 80% of more a few times a week can be effective as a mood boosting strategy and also serve as your healthy dessert.

Next, let's explore one of my favorites, the magic of turmeric. Turmeric is more than just a spice. It's a powerful natural antidepressant. The key component is curcumin, which has been extensively studied for its ability to enhance brain health.

Curcumen, the active ingredient, boosts levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a protein that plays a critical role in the growth and survival of neurons.

Turmeric and curcumin for depression support

Low levels BDNF have been linked to major depression and even cognitive decline. By increasing BDNF, curcumin can potentially reverse brain changes associated with depression.

What's even more fascinating is that a study published in phytotherapy research showed that curicumin was as effective as Prozac in reducing symptoms of depression without the side effects of a medication.

It's also a potent anti-inflammatory agent, which is important because inflammation is often a hidden driver of anxiety and depression, To get the most out of turmeric, try adding it to soups, curries, or smoothies and always paired with a pinch of black pepper, which increases curcumin's absorption by up to 2000%. The next food is one of my favorites to add into your daily meals, leafy greens.

Leafy green like spinach, kale, lettuces, as well as fish chard are a true powerhouse for mental health because they are packed with nutrients like folate.

magnesium, vitamin C, and beta-carotene. Folate, a B vitamin, is crucial for the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which regulate mood.

In fact, researchers found that individuals with low folate levels are at a higher risk of developing depression. Another important component is magnesium.

The same with dark chocolates, often called nature's chill pearl.

Leafy greens for neurotransmitters and stress

Magnesium helps regulate the body's stress response by acting on the hypothalamus, the part of your brain that controls your adrenal glands, which releases stress hormones like cortisol.

It's no wonder that a deficiency in magnesium can lead to increased anxiety and difficulty sleeping, including leafy greens in your meals, whether in a salad, a smoothie, or sauteed as a side dish, is a fantastic way to provide your brain with the nutrients it needs to handle stress more effectively.

The next one is yogurt. Now it has to be natural, probiotic-rich and plain yogurt, by the way, if you don't consume dairy, there are coconut yogurts as well as cashew nut yoghurts, soy yoghurt, many of which you can get plain or unflavoured and get them with probiotics as So look for those if you don't consume dairy.

Yogurt might not be the first food that comes to mind when you think about your mental health, but it has a profound effect on the gut-brain axis, which is the communication network between your gut and your brain.

Your gut is home to trillions of bacteria that produce neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and GABA. These chemicals play a huge role in regulating your mood, anxiety levels, and sleep patterns.

A healthy gut means a healthier brain and yogurt is packed with probiotics, which are the beneficial bacteria that help maintain gut health.

Yogurt, gut health, and the gut-brain axis

The study published in Psychiatry Research Journal found that people who regularly consume probiotic experience lower levels of stress and anxiety. Yogurt also contains tryptophan, an amino acid that your body converts into serotonin and melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep.

So choosing plain unsweetened yogurt ensures you're also getting all of these benefits without the added sugars, which can be counterproductive for your mental well-being.

Lastly, I'm going to talk about avocados. Avocadoes are really a delicious, technically fruit that you can eat which is high in fiber, magnesium, as well as nutrients that your body needs.

Adding a healthy fat rich in omega-3 fatty acids like avocados is a great way to enhance your salad or anything else that you're eating. So to summarize, these six foods, salmon, dark chocolate, turmeric, leafy greens, yogurt, and avacados are not just delicious, but scientifically proven to support your mental well-being.

They work together to reduce inflammation, support neurotransmitter production, and enhanced brain function helping you combat stress, anxiety, depression as well as insomnia.

Remember that small changes lead to big results over time. Start by adding one of these foods into your meals this week and see how it makes you feel.

Avocados and the six-food recap

If you enjoyed this video, please give it a thumbs up, subscribe to my channel and hit that notification bell so you never miss more tips on how to eat your way to a better mood.

And I'd love to hear from you. Which of these six foods are you excited to try? Which ones do you already eat? And which ones you really not like and want to think of a better option?

Because there are more foods that we can talk about too. Thank you so much for spending this time with me. And remember, you have the power to nourish your mind, body and soul with every bite.

So until the next time, take care and be kind to your minds. Don't forget, eat good food for a good mood. See you in our next video.