Introduction to the Gut-Brain Connection

Did you know that your stomach is actually your second brain? Hello, I'm Dr. Uma, your mood food expert, and welcome to my channel. I am a psychiatrist, a chef, also a teacher at Harvard and I've studied nutrition.

As a nutritional psychiatrist what I do is fuse my knowledge of the brain, of health and food to help my patients, students and now you who's watching this.

I am also a national and international bestselling author and I published two books, all relating to mood and food. In this channel, expect to learn more about the food you eat and how it affects your mood.

We will also be sharing tips on food, recipes and anything related to brain health to help you combat but also understand or at least manage your mode swings, anxiety, lack of focus, depression and even ADHD.

How Food Affects Mood and Mental Health

Have you been feeling tired, experiencing a lack of energy or focus that have been maybe a feeling of impending doom in your gut, more anxious than usual, sadder than usually?

If you said yes to any of these or even to all of What I will be sharing today might help you understand what you've been going through and hopefully help make the changes you need to feel better.

I am an advocate for eating healthy, most especially for my patients. Before giving any prescription, I always first touch up on diet and nutrition. Most of my patients who seek help for their brain health often give me a confused look as to why I treat the brain and gut like siblings, even if they're more than one torso apart from each other.

Because in a way, they are very much connected. Whatever you put in your stomach or your gut also goes to your brain. There is a truth to the saying that you are what you eat.

See the human body contains two brains, the one that you know which is in your head, and the second one is your gut, also close to your stomach. We call that the microbiome, or the gut microbiomes.

This gut Microbiome is a complex ecosystem of bacteria that weighs about the same amount as the brain and contains trillions of microbes. but also neurons, and these two brains interact and talk to each other.

A Patient Story About Diet and Anxiety

Research has shown that an unhealthy gut microbiome has been linked to a number of chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, anxiety and depression.

In short, whatever you put into your gut, also known as the foods you eat, will naturally affect your upper brain. But what's in your Upper Brain, that's where the control center of emotions and thinking resides.

If your second brain in your gut is healthy, your upper brain health will be healthy too. In short, good food is equal to a good mood. One afternoon in June, I met my niece for lunch, who had just recently got promoted.

I could see that she was ecstatic but also a little bit anxious, and she told me that felt as though she didn't deserve her promotion, despite her checking all the boxes for it.

that she felt like her other colleagues were more able to handle the stresses of the job. She also shared a few things that's she's been experiencing, like a lack of sleep, tightness in her stomach, butterflies in his stomach and also that didn't feel or have the urge to be physically active again.

Not that doesn't have time, it's just that he doesn' feel she had the energy to do anything. Like I mentioned earlier, I advocate for diet and nutrition as the first thing I asked her was what she'd been eating recently.

And she told me that because of being busy, she'd been eating a lot of takeout burgers and fried foods that were easy to eat. This is when I asked her to start eating better again.

Building a Better Diet with Brain Foods

And to help get her started, I went to the local supermarket and worked with her, to really go through a shopping list of anti-anxiety foods, To add foods to her diet, like almonds, avocados.

After about three weeks, with midweek follow-ups, She said she had been feeling a little better. gone on short walks, signed up for a gym class and was feeling more energy again.

I am not just saying that diet nutrition is always the answer to what you have going on, but it is very powerful in helping you feel less tired, give you more focus, improve anxiety and mood.

But the first step for you is to feel better, could be to check what your eating. Sometimes, those unhealthy foods are actually driving brain inflammation and continuing to make you feel worse.

In my next videos, I'll be discussing more about what foods cause brain infection, so stay tuned for that. So what can you do to start changing the food you eat for a better diet and nutrition?

There are three things you can follow. Look back to the past five days. List all the foods that you've eaten, either on your phone, on a piece of paper, or on the spreadsheet.

The goal here is for you to see what you have been eating. And fair warning, do not be angry with yourself. You've started to change for the better by taking the first step in your hands.

Be honest with yourselves here. The second step, now that you have written it down, is to complete a grocery list of the items that I call your top brain foods.

You can add these seven foods in at any time, one at a time and however you like. Include almonds, avocados, leafy green salads, turmeric with a pinch of black pepper, eggs and your favorite plain yogurt that can you add berries, nuts or even a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Bit by bit, add any of the 7 foods to your diet in moderation of course, but at the same time slowly remove the unhealthy foods in your diets.

Key Takeaways and Closing Advice

Eat in small quantities any food that has high sugar, such as ice cream or cake. Have them once in a while, not an everyday thing. Cut back on processed meats and salty snacks, as well as soda or energy drinks.

I also say this to my patients all the time. Take it step by step, slowly and consistently. It's a marathon and not a sprint. The key takeaways I'd like to share with you from this video are the following.

There are two brains, one in your head and one your gut. They talk to each other and communicate all time, and what you eat impacts the brain in your head.

So the gut-brain connection is powerful to help you understand that what you eat also impacts how you feel. If you want to have more focus, be less anxious, more physically active and enjoy better sleep, then you have to start by eating well.

Take small steps as you improve your nutrition and consistency is the key. Add almonds today and maybe

avocados in two days' time. And in summary, if you want to make your upper brain healthy that affects your mental well-being, then you have to feed your gut or your second brain with healthy foods too.

If your two brains are healthy, your lifestyle changes become easier. And if you want to understand more about this gut-brain connection, download my free ebook through the link in the description below.

See you in my next video and don't forget, good food equals good mood. Don't for get to subscribe and turn on the notification bell.