

The 10 Best Foods to Reduce Anxiety

According to Anthea Levi from Premium Health News Service posted a researched article stating the foods you put on your plate really can make a real difference when it comes to mental health issues, including anxiety disorder, one of the top causes of mental illnesses in the U.S.

How does food help with anxiety one may ask? Anxiety is caused in part by an imbalance of neurotransmitters, explains Ali Miller, R.D., an integrative dietitian and author of “The anti-anxiety Diet”. Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers believed to play a role in mood regulation. A diet that feature nutrients from whole food ingredients helps create neurotransmitter balance by improving the gut microbiome.

When it comes to dialing down anxiety, what you don’t eat is just as important as what you do, says Nathalie Rhone, R.D.N., a New York City- based nutritionist and founder of Nutrition by Nathalie. “Foods that are processed, high in sugar and refined carbohydrates, fried or loaded with additives can all heighten anxiety since they are inflammatory in your system, which can eventually affect your brain.”

Here are 10 foods to add to your meal-prep routine now:

1. **Turkey** – We’ve all been warned that tryptophan, an amino acid in turkey can send us into a food coma after a big Thanksgiving meal. But tryptophan’s relaxation effect can also ease anxiety. “Tryptophan helps the body produce serotonin, the happy, calming neurotransmitter that helps regulate sleep, say Rhone. “Tryptophan is usually highest in protein foods like turkey, but can also be found in nuts, seeds, and beans.”
2. **Salmon** – The versatile and satiating fish is loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for brain health and a well-functioning nervous system. Opt for wild salmon over farmed varieties.
3. **Dark chocolate** – The antioxidants in dark chocolate trigger the walls of blood vessels to relax, which boosts circulation and lowers blood pressure. Go ahead, make a small chunk of 70 percent (or higher) dark chocolate your new 3 p.m. pick-me-up.

4. **Asparagus** – One possible reason for asparagus’s soothing effect: high levels of the B vitamin folate, a shortage of which has been linked to depression. Just 1 cup of cooked asparagus provide nearly 70 percent of the daily recommended intake of folate.
5. **Sauerkraut** – Fermented products such as sauerkraut are considered probiotic foods, and consuming more of them on a regular basis appears to have a mood-boosting effect.
6. **Citrus fruits** – “Our adrenal glands are the most concentrated storage tissue for vitamin C and they use the nutrient in the regulation of cortisol,” says Miller. That might explain why studies show that vitamin C supplementations has been linked to reduced anxiety levels. Add lemons or limes to your tea and brighten yogurt bowls or salads with oranges and grapefruit.
7. **Broccoli** – Dark green veggies like broccoli contain magnesium, “a calming mineral that can help with relaxation, as well as with keeping things moving through your digestive system,” noted Rhone. Other top sources of magnesium include almonds, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds.
8. **Avocado** – Avocados are packed with monounsaturated fats and antioxidants that help optimize circulation, which contributes to better blood flow to the brain. The fruits also supply 20 different vitamins and minerals, including key nutrients tied to mood, like folate B6 and potassium.
9. **Oats** – Like leafy greens, oats contain high levels of soothing minerals like magnesium. Just a half of cup of dry oats provides a third of the recommended daily target for magnesium.
10. **Chamomile tea** – According to a report from Harvard Medical School, chamomile tea has been shown to be an effective alternative treatment from anxiety. Cozy up with a cup before bed to calm your system and set yourself up for a better night’s sleep.

I hope this information is helpful and gives you some food for thought.

With care,
Nurse Annette