

Healthy LIVING while aging!



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Foods and Spices to Curb Anxiety and Stress

By Natalie Mazzullo

There is no magic pill or remedy for anxiety. There is also no guarantee that you can always stay out of stressful situations. However, there is some good research that certain foods and nutrients may help support your body in reducing anxiety and improving how your body handles stress. Here is a list of some food and nutrients that may help support your mental and emotional health.

Fatty fish: Salmon and tuna are examples of fish rich in the omega-3 fatty acids. Fatty acids, especially those found in salmon and tuna, have been shown to improve symptoms of depression and may support your body in reducing anxiety. These fatty acids can also boost mental health and aid in cognitive function. So go ahead and order that tuna sandwich (light on the mayo and with whole wheat bread) or make a healthy salmon cake to see improvements in your anxiety symptoms.

Probiotic-rich foods: What even are probiotics? Probiotics are live microorganisms (bacteria) that when eaten or taken, live in the gut. Good gut health aids in reducing anxiety and we may find, with further research, that it is a preventative measure for depression. Food rich in probiotics are pickles, buttermilk and yogurt.

Leafy greens: Having low levels of magnesium in your diet has been associated with an increased risk of depression. The recommended dietary allowance for adults over the age of 51 is 320 milligrams a day for women and 420 milligrams a day for men.

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How do those milligrams equate to food and portion size? A handful (about one ounce) of almonds has 80 milligrams, a half-cup of boiled spinach has 78 milligrams, a half-cup of cooked black beans has 60 milligrams, and two tablespoons of peanut butter has 49 milligrams. The proper amount of magnesium can also assist with reducing inflammation, managing the hormone cortisol, and relaxing the body and mind.

Protein: Proteins, especially when consumed in the morning, can help make serotonin, a hormone that calms your mood and increases feelings of happiness and well-being. This brain hormone is responsible for helping to lower anxiety and boost mood. It can assist with mood boosting. The American Society for Nutrition recommended eating 15 grams at breakfast (the equivalent of about two large eggs with one ounce of cheese).

Certain spices: The spices saffron and turmeric may reduce both depression and anxiety. Additionally, some research suggests that ginger may be effective in reducing anxiety, as well. An interesting fact is that saffron is grown at the Dayton Elementary School garden right here in Nevada.

Here is an easy exercise to reduce stress by going no further than your fruit bowl. Grab an orange or other citrus fruit, and then take time to really examine it as if you'd never seen it before. Now smell it, peel it and eat it. Use all five of your senses — sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. As you are focusing intently on this process, you will tune down your nervous system, which is responsible for producing that panicky fight-or-flight response and reduce anxiety.

For more information about Healthy Aging education or resources, please visit our website: extension.unr.edu and search "Healthy Aging" or contact healthyaging@unr.edu.

Reduce Stress and Anxiety with Healthy Food

April is Stress Awareness Month. Try adding these additional healthy foods to your diet to help support a healthy response system.

- Foods high in vitamin B – chicken, fortified cereals
- Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids – avocados, tuna, walnuts
- Magnesium rich foods (especially in the a.m.) – bananas, spinach
- Protein rich foods – lean meats, lentils, eggs
- Gut healthy foods – Greek yogurt, sauerkraut



Celebrate Earth Day with a Grow Your Own Herb Kit.

Contact healthyaging@unr.edu for more information.



National Move More Month is every April. The objective of this month is clear and simple: get up and move! Created by the American Heart Association to help improve the health of Americans everywhere, National Move More Month is aimed at getting us to hit more steps every day, or even better, do more aerobic exercise every day. Visit the American Heart Association website for more fitness tips, <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness>.

You know you need physical activity to stay healthy.
But did you know it can help you feel better right away?



Boost your mood



Sharpen your focus



Reduce your stress



Improve your sleep

So get more active – and start feeling better today.

Egg Bites

The perfect recipe for a quick and easy breakfast and a great way to get some protein in the morning before starting your day!

Ingredients:

- 6 eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup fat-free milk
- 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 6 English muffins



- (Optional) 1/2 to 1 cup vegetables, diced onions, peppers, broccoli, spinach, mushroom)
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Nonstick cooking spray

Directions: 1) Preheat the oven to 350°F. 2) In a medium bowl, combine beaten eggs, milk, pepper and salt. 3) (Optional) Mix in diced vegetables. 4) Pour mixture into a lightly greased 9 x 13 baking dish. 5) Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until cooked through. 6) Remove from the oven and cut eggs into six even squares. 7) Toast the English muffins in a toaster or on a baking sheet for 8 to 10 minutes. 8) Place one egg bite onto an English muffin. Source: <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/recipes/egg-bites/>.

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