



## THE TOP 7 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT FOOD AND MOOD

by Alexandra Jamieson, CHHC

### 1. You're So Sweet – Our Sugar Intake Is Depressing

In the last 100 years, we've moved away from a nutritious diet to a highly refined one. We're eating more sugar and refined carbohydrates than ever and aren't eating nearly enough of the whole foods that support neurotransmitter production and balanced moods.

A balanced mood requires a balance in the levels of neurotransmitters and hormones that have a strong influence on our mental well-being. What's important to realize is that these influential chemicals are made from the nutrition found in real food like whole grains, beans, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Refined foods like bread and sugar actually deplete the body's reserves of important building blocks like vitamins and minerals needed to maintain balanced blood sugar, energy and mood. Refined sugar also decreases your body's ability to handle pain. If you're eating regular doses of sweets, you'll feel that headache or back pain faster and more intensely.

Conversely, whole grains provide the body with long-lasting energy in the form of complex carbohydrates, minerals and B vitamins which support a healthy nervous system.

Here's a Food-Mood Upgrade for you: Replace your white flour products with hearty whole grains that fill you up and boost your mood.

### 2. Caffeine: Wake Up to This Mood Killer

We use caffeine to wake us up, but when we slurp up our cup of coffee, tea or Red Bull, we're also directly inhibiting the body's production of serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that affects mood, sexual desire and function, appetite, sleep, memory and learning, and some social behavior. If you consume regular amounts of caffeine throughout the day, your brain and body won't be able to chemically balance your mood. Common symptoms of serotonin deficiency include heart and intestinal issues, sleep problems, which is also directly affected by caffeine, muscle pain, migraine headaches, and cravings for sugar, carbohydrates, and alcohol.

Here's a Food-Mood Upgrade for you: Upgrade your morning brew with green tea instead of coffee and say goodbye to the stuff that does a number on your afternoon energy.



### 3. Dear Diary, What Am I Eating That's Making Me Feel Awful?

It can be difficult to connect your diet to your mood. What if you ate something two days ago that's causing your depression, stomach pain or headache today? It can take four days for a specific food to affect you or clear your body.

To better understand your eating patterns and how they're affecting your body and mood, keep a food-mood diary. Write down what you eat and when. Write down how you feel as well. Not only will you start to see patterns of your food habits, you'll start to see if something is negatively affecting your health from day to day.

### 4. The Great Fake Out: Artificial Sweeteners are Depressing

Many artificial sweeteners, including aspartame found in NutraSweet, can block serotonin receptors. As with caffeine, artificial sweeteners can inhibit the brain's ability to use serotonin correctly. This can lead to depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, panic, and even excess anger. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that affects mood, sexual desire and function, appetite, sleep, memory and learning, and some social behavior.

The B Vitamins, including B6 which is especially important here, can be found in natural foods such as bell peppers, spinach, garlic, cauliflower, banana, asparagus, broccoli, kale and collard greens.

Here's a Food-Mood Upgrade for you: Can't go without your Sweet-n-low? Try Stevia powder packets made from the Stevia plant. Same sweet taste minus the cancer causing toxins and blood sugar swings.

### 5. That Morning Muffin Is Wrecking Your Gut And Your Mood

People who can't properly digest *gluten*, a protein found in grains such as wheat, barley, rye and most oats, are known as *celiac intolerant*. When a gluten-sensitive person eats these grains for many years, their digestive system is damaged. This damage can cause tears in the intestinal lining, which then leads to malabsorption of nutrients.

If an undiagnosed celiac sufferer's depression, it can be related to malabsorption of nutrients, then eating a gluten-free diet can help. A gluten-free diet allows the digestive system to heal and nutrient absorption will improve. Tryptophan is necessary for the body's production of serotonin, which is a central neurotransmitter involved in regulation of mood and anxiety. A healthy digestive system leads to better tryptophan absorption from foods such as organic soy foods, whole grains, beans, hazelnuts, peanuts, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds.

Here's a simple action step: Testing for gluten intolerance and celiac disease is a wise step if these symptoms sound familiar. A gluten-free diet is easier to live with these days, as many gluten-free products are available in health food stores and restaurants.

## 6. Milking Your Mood

Dairy is one of the top five food allergens. An allergy to a certain food like the dairy found in milk, cheese and butter can cause symptoms such as anxiety, attention deficit disorders, fatigue, gas, headaches, irritability, and joint pain. Another dangerous aspect of dairy consumption is lactose intolerance. Most humans lack the digestive enzymes necessary to digest the milk sugar lactose, leading to digestive problems.

Dairy foods also contain casein, a protein. If you don't properly digest casein, or have a casein allergy, you may have symptoms such as gastro-intestinal problems like diarrhea, gas or bloating, respiratory problems like asthma, or skin problems like eczema. Long term exposure to dairy foods can cause malabsorption problems similar to someone who suffers from celiac disease. This long-term malabsorption or allergy symptoms can lead to depression, anxiety, and irritability.

Here's a simple solution: Switching your dairy foods to plant milks like soy, rice, almond or hemp milk, dairy free cheeses or vegan, trans-fat free margarines is the best path to avoiding disease-inducing dairy.

## 7. Preserve Your Mood By Avoiding Food Preservatives And Colorings

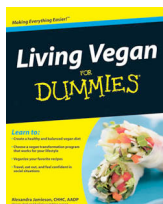
Blue ice cream, red and green cake decorations, crackers and milk dyed the color of the rainbow—all are a visual treat for children and adults. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved hundreds of food additives, flavor enhancers, and colorings but this doesn't mean they are safe.

Artificial colors and flavors such as yellow and red dyes, and MSG are also called “excito-toxins” because they excite our brain’s neurons to be overly active, and can even cause them to die. Consuming these additives over years has been linked to neurodegenerative diseases and mood disorders. MSG can be hidden on food labels with the terms hydrolyzed vegetable protein, vegetable protein, natural flavorings, yeast extract, and even “spices.”

Quick tip: Avoid food preservatives, flavor enhancers, aspartame, and food colorings by avoiding processed, colored foods.

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### **About the author:**

Alexandra Jamieson has been seen on *Oprah*, *The Final Word*, *30 Days* and *The National Health Test with Bryant Gumble*. She was also featured in the award-winning documentary *Super Size Me*. Her knowledge of nutrition has been artfully developed through years of both professional and self-study. As the daughter of natural health advocates, Alex crafted a unique personal mission to spread the word about the power of healthy food and the astounding ways in which it can positively transform everyday life.

### **Alex now commands a matchless repertoire of nutritional wisdom and food savvy.**

She is a professionally trained healthy gourmet chef, having studied at New York City’s Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts. She refined her techniques by cooking professionally in Milan, Italy, as well as at a variety of popular New York City restaurants.

In addition, Alex is a certified health and nutrition counselor. She studied with ground-breaking pioneers in the field of nutrition at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, which is accredited by Columbia University’s Teacher’s College and by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners.

Alex also traveled the world, visiting over 20 countries, premiering *Super Size Me*, an Oscar-nominated documentary, acting as a messenger for the power of holistic nutrition and healthy detoxing. Though she readily and ably shares her message with all, **her passion is helping professional women enhance their ability to excel and achieve using healthy food as a catalyst.**

**Time and again, her clients experience the magic that happens when they feel great in their own bodies. Members of her programs step up to a new level of confidence and willingly expand and explore bigger dreams and authentic goals.**

A healthy and energetic vegan herself, Alex lives in New York City with her family and a lively boy cat named Sue. She is currently working on her next book and proves that living a healthy life is most definitely far from boring.

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