Ladies, let's talk about good mood food - Media release

Dietitians are encouraging Australian women to connect with each other – either in person or virtually – and share good food to support a good mood.

This message comes as Australia celebrates Women's Health Week, which today focuses on ways to champion better mental health.

"A nutritious diet affects how we feel both mentally and physically," said Simone Austin, Accredited Practising Dietitian and media spokesperson for Dietitians Australia.

"By prioritising fresh foods like fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, you're likely to be rewarded with long-term good health.

"What you eat has the power to support better brain function, concentration, memory and mood.

"Nutritious food also gives you energy for exercise and can support a better night's sleep. These are both so important for a healthy headspace. Mental health is more important than ever, as COVID-19 disrupts our daily routines," said Simone.

A recent survey commissioned by Dietitians Australia uncovered that half of survey respondents felt better when they ate certain foods. Of the 1000 survey participants, the food most commonly reported to boost mood was chocolate, followed by fruit.

"There are many reasons why we feel better after eating certain foods – the pleasure of the taste, to nutrients supporting our gut and brain health," said Simone.

“For example, fruit is packed full of B vitamins and fibre, used by your body in the everyday cell function required for mental wellbeing. It also is a source of natural sugars which are a type of carbohydrate – the preferred energy source for the brain.

“If you’re after a simple mood-boosting change to your day, make fruit your go-to snack for morning or afternoon tea. Enjoy those that are in-season – think bananas, strawberries, melons, and oranges for spring – they’re likely to be full of flavour.

“You might even like to opt for some delicious in-season fruit with a light drizzle of dark chocolate.”

Along with the nutritional benefits of food[1], what we eat also can support our mental health through the associated social benefits[2].

Australians agree, with the survey revealing that more than 80% of respondents enjoy connecting with others over a meal, particularly to spend time with family and friends.

“For Women’s Health Week, we’re encouraging women to connect with their networks – whether it be with their household, or family and friends. While lockdowns across the country mean that for many this might be via video-call, it’s never been more important to share good mood food ideas,” said Simone.

As today also coincides with R U OK day, sharing a meal provides a great reason to check in and see how your network is going.

“Sharing ideas for good mood foods is one way to get the conversation started to ask, ‘are you ok’,” said Simone.

“My other favourite is to find out what is the best meal that someone has ever made. It’s a win-win too because you might just get some inspiration for your next dinner.”

ENDS

[1]Jacka, F.N., O’Neil, A., Opie, R. et al. A randomised controlled trial of dietary improvement for adults with major depression (the ‘SMILES’ trial). BMC Med 15, 23 (2017).

[2]The University of Oxford: Media release – Social eating connects communities.

Media enquiries

For media enquiries and interviews, contact our Media Officer on 0409 661 920.

Note to editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice of nutrition in Australia, representing dietitians nationally and advocating for healthier communities. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia.