



Food & your mood

Eating well can help

Eating well can help give you more energy, sleep better, improve your concentration and keep a healthy headspace. When we think about improving our mental health, we might not think about changing the food we eat, but research tells us there's a strong link between what we eat and how we feel.

What 'eating well' means

Eating well for your mental health includes eating a balanced, variety of foods such as:

- *colourful fruit and vegetable varieties*
- *high fiber foods (like wholegrain cereals and bread, beans, chickpeas, lentils and nuts)*
- *fermented foods (i.e., unsweetened yoghurt)*
- *omega 3 oils (i.e., olive oil, fish – tinned is fine)*
- *protein (a variety of protein choices are good, but try and limit red meat to max 3-4 times per week).*

Eating well matters, but if you're having a tough time, this can make it harder. We know eating well can also be impacted by a lot of things like living arrangements, money and relationships.

Small changes can have a huge positive impact:



Set yourself small goals that are easy to stick to. You could start by including fruit or yoghurt as your afternoon snack.



Sometimes how we're feeling affects what or how we eat; so it's good to develop your own coping strategies for these times that aren't related to food. Things like staying active, catching up with family or friends, or relaxation activities.



Connect with your community and see if local community centres or cultural groups have cooking groups you can connect with.



And always be kind to yourself – celebrate your wins, both big and small. They can help give you the confidence and motivation to keep going.

Eating well is an important healthy habit, but it's not the only one. Things like staying active, getting enough sleep, doing things every day and spending time on your relationships are also important for good mental health.