



6 Nutrients That Can Improve Your Mood- Part 2

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In [Part 1](#), we reviewed 3 nutrients that help stabilize moods: Folate, Omega 3 Fatty Acids and L-Theanine. Read further to learn 3 additional nutrients that have a positive impact on our moods and energy levels.

4. MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is crucial for more than 300 body functions including anti-anxiety benefits. Though abundant in whole foods, magnesium is often stripped from packaged foods through food processing techniques. The RDA for magnesium is roughly 300 – 400 mg per day. However, most people obtain only 200 mg or less each day from their diets.

Food sources of magnesium include:

- Whole grains (buckwheat, quinoa, wheat bran, millet, brown rice)
- Beans (soybeans, pintos, black eyed peas, lentils)
- Leafy greens (beet, collard and dandelion greens, spinach, Swiss chard)
- Nuts (almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, peanuts, pecans)

The **RDA** for magnesium for adults is:

- **19–30 years old: 310 mg/day for women, 400 mg/day for men**
- **31 years and older: 320 mg/day for women, 420 mg/day for men**

Strive for 5 – 6 servings of high magnesium foods every day to achieve optimal intake and to improve your mood.

(Note that many high magnesium foods are also high in folate – another mood boosting nutrient).

Supplement Facts:

Because of its calming effect, when taken at bedtime, **magnesium glycinate** may assist with restful sleep. Talk to your health care provider or nutritionist about whether magnesium glycinate is appropriate for you. If so, look for a high quality magnesium glycinate supplement (like Pure Encapsulations®, Thorne® or KAL®) at Whole Foods or on-line. In addition, magnesium glycinate can be compounded at a compounding pharmacy (prescription required).

For more information about Magnesium, check out these articles from [NIH](#) and [University of Maryland Medical Center](#).

5. LOW GLYCEMIC CARBOHYDRATES (high fiber, slow digesting)

Did you know carbohydrates boost serotonin, the “happy” brain chemical? Serotonin levels can decrease in the winter months due to lack of sunlight. This can cause some folks to crave carbs and over-reach for sugar and white, processed starches. Unfortunately, these high glycemic carbs (quick digestion followed by a fast spike and crash in blood glucose) can rob your energy and perpetuate a sugar craving. This scenario can also create the potential for winter weight gain.

Break this cycle by foregoing the sweets and choose low glycemic, slow digesting carbs instead. Low glycemic carbs are a healthy way to boost serotonin levels. In addition, they fill you up quicker and keep you full longer. This eliminates glucose spikes and crashes which can help prevent mood swings.

Remember to keep your portion of low glycemic, starchy carbs to ¼ of your plate.

Sources of Low Glycemic Carbs include:

- Beans (pintos, limas, black beans, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, lentils)
- Whole grains (quinoa, amaranth, millet, buckwheat, brown rice, wild rice, steel cut oats)
- Winter squashes (butternut and acorn)
- Sweet potatoes

6. CLEAN, LEAN PROTEIN

Another way to stabilize your mood and energy level is to “anchor” all of your carbs (at meals AND snacks) with a lean protein and a little healthy fat. Lean protein promotes healthy glucose levels by slowing digestion and releasing glucose slowly into the blood stream. Like low glycemic carbohydrates, lean protein prevents glucose spikes and crashes which helps prevent mood swings.

Sources of lean protein include:

- Fish
- Poultry
- Bison
- Beef
- Beans
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Nuts
- Tofu and tempeh

Digging Deeper

If healthy nutrition and lifestyle efforts (regular exercise and daily exposure to natural sunlight) do not improve your moods, have a conversation with your primary care provider about a variety of treatment options.

Resources:

- Institute for Functional Medicine, *Clinical Nutrition*, 2004.
- Hyman, Mark, *The UltraMind Solution*, 2008.
- Dietary Supplements Fact Sheets, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements, 2012.
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine Guide, University of Maryland Medical Center, 2013.
- Korb, Alex, PhD, Boosting Your Serotonin Activity, *Psychology Today*, 2011.
- Consumerlab.com, 2014