

# Eating for Mental Well-being



## What's the link?

Mental health involves a state of well-being & the ability to cope with life's daily stresses. Nutrition plays an active role in mental health.



A varied, balanced diet can help you feel your **best!**



## Nutrients for Brain Health

### **Polyunsaturated fats (Omega 3's & 6's)**

- Important for membrane maintenance & hormone production
- Found in oils, fatty fish, flax, soybeans

### **Vitamins C & E**

- Antioxidants which may help protect the brain from damage by oxidative stress
- Found in fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds

### **B Vitamins**

- Important for neurotransmitter synthesis
- Found in whole grains, meat, dairy, eggs

### **Iron**

- Helps the blood carry oxygen to the brain
- Found in leafy greens, legumes, meat

### **Magnesium**

- Important for signaling & DNA synthesis
- Found in greens, nuts, whole grains

## Getting a Helping Hand

If you or someone you care for is experiencing a challenging relationship with food or disordered eating, it is important to get help immediately. Recovering from an eating disorder is possible! However, it most often takes professional support.

Don't be afraid to reach out for support.

**Keep in Mind:** only the person with disordered eating can decide to get help.



For more information on eating disorders visit the **National Eating Disorder Information Center** at [www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)



## Resources on Campus

### • **Student Health Services:**

- 1st floor JT Powell

### • **Wellness Education Center:**

- 1st floor JT Powell

### • **Counseling Services:**

- 2nd floor JT Powell



**Comments? Questions? Contact SNAP!**  
[snap@uoguelph.ca](mailto:snap@uoguelph.ca)



@SNAPUofGuelph



Student  
Nutrition  
Awareness  
Program

# Brain Positive Eating Tips

The food you eat has an effect on how you **think & feel!**

## 1. Try to Eat Regular Meals

Eating regular, nutritious meals & snacks throughout the day **maintains blood sugar**



levels & helps you feel your best.

Skipping meals can lead to irritability & tiredness.

## 2. Choose Whole Foods More Often

Eating a variety of **nutritious foods** helps you **stay energized**. Processed foods are often high in sodium & sugar & low in nutrients which can prevent you from feeling your best.

## 3. Caffeine & Alcohol in Moderation

**Excess alcohol & caffeine** can increase blood pressure & anxiety as well as disrupt sleep. *Never drink alcohol to cope with stress or emotions.* Aim to hydrate with water!



## 4. Enjoy Your Food

**Food** is meant to **sustain** you & **be enjoyed**. Try making meals a time to relax & re-focus. All foods fit in a healthy lifestyle in moderation.

## 5. Love Yourself

**Every body is unique!** Focus on being your best self & not on comparing yourself to others. When you focus on being your **best self** you help create a more diverse & productive world!  
Love the body you have & take time to nourish it.



# What is Body Image?

Body image is your mental picture of your body & how you feel about it. Positive body image is important for well-being & eating disorder prevention. Body positivity involves feeling comfortable & confident in your natural body & recognizing how you look does not describe your character or value.

## Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are real, treatable physical & psychiatric illnesses where a person feels extremely fixated on food, exercise, or body image. Eating disorders are not lifestyle choices or fads & they can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, or body type.



## Common Eating Disorders

- Anorexia nervosa**— characterized by self-starvation & excessive weight loss
- Bulimia nervosa**—characterized by a cycle of binge eating followed by compensatory behaviors like vomiting
- Binge eating disorder**—characterized by sessions of bingeing or eating excessively which are not followed by compensatory behavior
- Orthorexia**— characterized by an obsession with only eating “pure” or “healthy” foods

## Common Warning Signs

- Obsession with food, weight, or body image
  - Secretive, abnormal, or ritualistic food habits
  - Frequent trips to the toilet after meals, self induced vomiting, fasting, or binge eating
  - Feelings of isolation, depression or anxiety
- These signs are not all inclusive. If you are concerned about your health or the health of a friend seek professional guidance.*