

# food and mood

The quarterly  
newsletter of  
the Food and  
Mood Project

Issue no. 6  
Winter 2001/2

## Eat clever!

In this extract from her recently published *Brain Food*, Lorraine Perretta talks about food for brain performance

**There is much controversy surrounding the concept of intelligence. Some people insist that intelligence is genetically programmed, something we are born with, while others suggest that intelligence can be fostered within an encouraging educational environment.**

Now a growing body of scientific evidence suggests that diet can play a key role in improving IQ levels. Students of all ages should assess their diet to ensure the brain is receiving the correct nutrients.

We have already seen that a large number of different vitamins and minerals are required to produce optimum thinking power. In addition to these nutrients, the body needs carbohydrates, protein and essential fats for proper brain function.

Foods that supply these key groups of brain-boosting nutrients are vital for improving concentration and learning ability. For students of any age, eating the right types of foods can lead to a dramatic improvement in health and mental performance.

### Brain power

First and foremost, the brain needs energy. Although the brain weighs

only 1.5kg (3lbs), it consumes 25 per cent of the body's total energy. This energy is used to fuel the steady transmission of electrical impulses and communication between nerve cells. Unlike other organs, the brain does not store energy, so in order to function it needs a constant supply of two major fuels: oxygen and glucose. Oxygen is supplied through breathing and the glucose, which is a sugar, is found in carbohydrate foods in the diet. Having a good supply of the correct fuel is vital for peak mental performance.



### Fuel for thought

It is important for the brain that the blood delivers a steady and even supply of glucose during studying and periods of intense concentration. Many students complain that

in an exam situation, their mind goes blank and they cannot remember a thing. In many cases, it may be that their brains are low on glucose fuel, resulting in poor concentration, reduced mental energy and diminished alertness. The best foods for supplying brain fuel are complex carbohydrates found in whole grains and vegetables.

Many young students consume vast quantities of refined carbohy-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

### FROM THE EDITOR



You can't get away from it – essential fatty acids are, well, essential for good mental health. I'll let you count how many times EFAs are mentioned this issue but it's more than once. Oil rich fish would seem to be the most brain-friendly source of these fats, needed for both the structure and functioning of the brain, but oily fish aren't everyone's cup of tea (as it were). Instead, how about paying a visit to your local dealer to get yourself fixed up with some very brain nutritious cannabis seeds? Don't worry, this 'wonder food' can be purchased – perfectly legally and THC-free – from high street health food shops. So, start reading to find out why you have to have hemp ...

Amanda Geary  
Food and Mood Project Founder

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drates, including sweets, biscuits, chocolates and soft drinks. A survey of British children conducted by the UK's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in 2000 reported 'the



foods most commonly consumed by young people in the survey, eaten by more than 80 per cent of the group during the seven-day dietary recorded, were white bread, savoury snacks, potato chips (French fries), biscuits, boiled, mashed and jacket potatoes and chocolate confectionery'. Although all these food contain lots of sugar, it is not the best kind of sugar for the brain. The first important step in achieving academic excellence is to eat what are known as complex carbohydrates, found in fruits and vegetables, seeds, nuts and whole grains in the form of wholemeal and millet pasta, brown rice and quinoa.

## Mental messengers

Protein is another important brain food. Via various biochemical steps, proteins are converted to neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters are the way in which the brain processes information. Key protein foods include meat, fish, eggs and dairy products, such as milk and cheese. Since saturated fats can actually interfere with how the brain's messengers communicate, fish and lean cuts of meat and poultry are the proteins of choice for the smart students.

## Smart fats

Omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids are vital for healthy nerve and brain cells. The fats are necessary for proper brain development and function, and have been shown to increase brain size and aid learning. Oily fish (mackerel, herrings, sardines and kippers) are the best sources of omega-3 oils, while fresh brazil nuts, hazelnuts, almonds, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds all contain omega-6 oils.

## IQ boosting minerals and vitamins

The remaining IQ boosting nutrients are the vitamins and minerals. These are needed in much smaller amounts than carbohydrates or protein foods but each one is vital. Researchers have found that a deficiency in just one of these important vitamins and minerals can reduce mental alertness. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, plus some meat and fish can provide all the key minerals and vitamins needed for mental and physical health.

There are nine key minerals necessary for maximum mental powers: iron, magnesium, phosphorous, manganese, sodium, potassium, calcium, zinc and boron. These nutrients make sure that brain messages travel smoothly and efficiently around the brain and

nervous system. This means increased alertness, greater understanding and improved memory.

Researchers at the Faculty of Medicine, University of the State of Mexico, conducted a study on iron-deficient children between six and twelve years old. They found that iron-deficient (but not anaemic) children had significantly lower scores in tests on information and comprehension, as well as lower overall IQ scores, when compared with children with adequate iron levels.

The recommended intake levels of minerals set by governments may be inadequate for optimum mental and physical performance. The recommendations are designed to avoid signs of deficiency, like anaemia in the case of iron. But as we can see from the Mexico study above, students with low levels of iron experienced

learning difficulties even though the levels were not low enough to cause anaemia.

In addition to minerals, there are vitamins that are especially important for the brain. These



are the B complex vitamins – B1, B2, B3, B5, B6 and biotin, plus vitamin C, which are necessary to convert carbohydrates to glucose for mental energy. They are also important in the production of neurotransmitters. The MAFF study reports that only 20 per cent of 15-18 year old girls eat citrus fruit – a rich source of vitamin C.

## Variety for health

The best way to get all these essential brain-boosting nutrients in the diet is to eat as wide a range of foods as possible. The key word is variety. Both the person who has a tuna sandwich every single lunchtime and the child who eats only carrots will be missing important brain-building vitamins and minerals.

Lorraine Perretta is a nutrition consultant based in London and has been a tutor and a lecturer at the Institute of Optimum Nutrition since 1996. She may be contacted on 020 7381 0688.

*Brain Food* by Lorraine Perretta (with recipes by Oona van den Berg) is published by Hamlyn, price £14.99. The photos in this article are taken from the book.

AT UNIVERSITY...

...omega-3 essential fatty acids, found abundantly in oily fish, and particularly the eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid, are needed in the ideal ratio of 3:2 for neuronal signal transmission functioning and cell membrane neurotransmitter receptor structure to enable an optimum IQ...

AT HOME...

*Eat your fish, dear, it's good for your brain*

## Fatty acids and neurodevelopmental disorders **Oxford University, September 2001**

*A distinguished panel of UK and US scientists met recently at Oxford University to exchange news and views on the importance of dietary fats for brain development and functioning.*

Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are vital for brain health due to their ability **to maintain flexibility of brain cell membranes and to enable a normal flow of chemical messengers**, such as serotonin, between brain cells. Dr Alex Richardson (Imperial College School of Medicine and University of Oxford) gave an overview of dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and autism and described the 'very significant overlap' between these diagnostic categories offering the term 'phospholipid spectrum disorders' as giving a more accurate indication of the importance of the brain phospholipid abnormalities involved.

According to Dr John Richer (John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford) **the signs suggestive of a dietary cause of ADHD and autism** were listed as: allergy, red ears, pasty face and dark shadows, 'Michelin man' appearance, catarrh and glue ear, hypersensitivity, gastrointestinal problems, frequent urination, excess drinking, aches, cramping and fatigue.

Dr Madeline Portwood (Durham Local Education Authority) discussed developmental disorders at school and announced a double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover trial to assess **the impact of essential fatty acid supplementation on dyspraxia and dyslexia in children** that is beginning soon in Durham.

Dietary HUFAs (highly unsaturated fatty acids) from evening primrose oil and fish oil are needed to enable eye focusing and movement (abilities that are vital to effective learning), according to Prof John Stein (University of Oxford). HUFAs (specifically DGLA, AA, EPA and DHA) can be made in the body from the 'parent' fatty acids LA and ALA found in nut and seed oils, but unfortunately their conversion can be blocked by various dietary and lifestyle factors (see box). So **vegetarians, vegans and others may be at risk of deficiency** if fish sources of HUFAs are not consumed.

Dr Joseph Hibbeln (NIAA, NIH) drew attention to the need for a correct balance between omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids. He reported that **rates of depression, manic depression and homicide rates are dramatically higher in those countries where the dietary intake of fish is lowest**. A dietary intake of omega 6:omega 3 in a ratio of 1:3 or 1:4 was recommended.

**Breast-fed children tend to have a higher IQ** than those who are bottle-fed, reported Dr Peter Willats (University of Dundee). This is thought to be due to the naturally occurring AA and DHA in breast milk and studies

indicate that eating omega-3 containing foods during pregnancy may also influence infant IQ.

Dr Paul Shattock OBE (Autism Research Unit, University of Sunderland) discussed the management of children with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and recommended **essential fatty acid supplementation to help reduce the permeability of membranes** that underlie the associated 'leaky gut' syndrome.

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Minor signs of essential fatty acid deficiency:

- excessive thirst
  - frequent urination
  - rough, dry skin and hair
  - dandruff
  - soft or brittle nails
- 

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## Oiling the brain: what the experts recommend

Conversion from the parent fats in the food we eat to the HUFAs we need in the brain can be blocked by a number of dietary and lifestyle factors including:

- a high intake of saturated fats (from animal sources)
- hydrogenated and trans fats (modified fats found in most processed foods)
- deficiencies in vitamins and minerals essential to the enzymes responsible for the conversion process and particularly vitamins B1, B6 and C and minerals magnesium and zinc.
- excessive alcohol or caffeine consumption
- smoking
- stress

Two important HUFAs (EPA and DHA) can be obtained directly from fish oil. Two to three portions of oil rich fish (e.g. mackerel, sardines, herring, salmon) per week or a daily supplement of 1-3g fish oil is recommended.

Fish liver oils such as cod liver oil in large quantities carry the risk of Vitamin A toxicity and so a fish oil supplement makes a safer choice.

Linseed oil has been the vegetarians choice for omega-3 oils but hemp oil (see Food Cupboard on page 5) offers a more oil-balanced alternative.

Benefits of a change in diet or supplement programme can be felt as soon as one week but it can take approximately three months for a brain to recover from chronic deficiency – so don't give up!

# Allergy and the brain – behaviour and performance

The Royal Society of Medicine,  
London, October 2001

*A fascinating programme of presentations relation to how the mind and body are linked was enjoyed by scientists and medical practitioners in London recently.*

Dr Michael Radcliffe talked about food intolerance and why, despite the Government claim that less than 2 in 100 people are affected, the figure is more likely ten times higher, at **20-30 per cent of the population**. Although food reactions can be learned and are susceptible to classic conditioning, the elimination and challenge diet remains the procedure of choice for diagnosing intolerance.

Dr Ellen Goudsmit, known for her work on ME/CFS argued that the emphasis on psychological factors in illness has now gone too far. She talked of **editorial bias in scientific journals** (such as that which appears to favour Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in the British Medical Journal) which gives rise to inappropriate treatments and unnecessary psychological distress.

Dr Pamela Ashurst discussed somatisation disorder and the use of this diagnosis for 'long-standing and apparently inexplicable physical and emotional symptoms which are multiple, recurrent and frequently changing'. This symptom picture can also describe food intolerance. Whether or not food intolerance is recognised is likely to depend on the physician's 'entrenched belief systems' based on the

**continuing separation of mind and body.**

Prof 'Ted' Dinan talked in detail about the molecules that link mind and body. The stress response of **the body-mind cannot differentiate between psychological and physical stressors**. Chronic stress affects the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and can give rise to abnormal levels of the stress hormone cortisol and associated depression. Prof Dinan also talked of the **links between brain and gut** and how neurotransmitter receptors in the brain influence the functioning of the bowel.

Dr Michael Jorgensen discussed psychoneuroimmunology and the idea that the **immune systems is like a 'floating brain'**. He described experiments which had demonstrated that certain inflammatory and allergic responses **can be controlled with the power of the mind** using direct hypnotic suggestion. Responses can also be affected by the emotions.

The Countess of Mar talked of her campaigning work on the effect of pesticide poisoning from organophosphates, telling of her **personal experience of the illness and suffering that these chemicals can cause** in susceptible individuals. She suggested that people who find they feel better eating white bread rather than wholemeal may be sensitive to the chemicals that can remain in the whole-grain for up to 5 years after spraying.

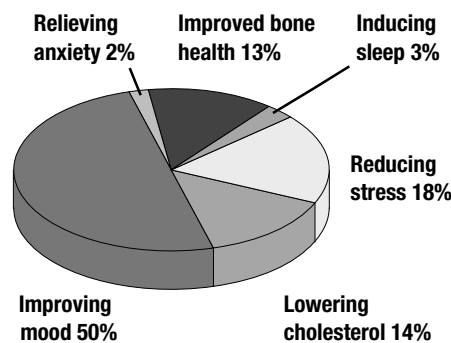
ME/CFS and Gulf War Syndrome, according to Dr Bob Davies, can indicate a chronic organophosphate induced disorder. The effects of OPs are similar to nerve gas and they **depress the immune system and can deplete serotonin levels**. He also referred to the conspiracy regarding research funding that prevents the real danger of these pesticides from being revealed to the public.

## News

# What we want from food

Following from the functional foods article (in issue no. 5. of *Food and Mood*) we have received details from Emma Williams, PhD student at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, of preliminary research<sup>1</sup> investigating consumer attitudes towards 'mood and performance foods' that was presented recently at the functional foods conference in Paris.

In a survey of 90 supermarket shoppers it was found that 53% of those questioned had never tried any of the well-known functional food products they were shown. However, if shoppers do invest in functional foods half of those surveyed would – given the choice – make their selection on the basis of the food's ability to improve mood. Reducing stress and



**PREFERRED FUNCTIONS OF FOOD**

relieving anxiety make up a further 20% of the preferred functions of food (see pie chart).

The mind-altering affect of food was rated more desirable than the physical health claims of functional foods which are currently available, such as the prevention of heart disease, reduction of blood cholesterol levels or bowel health.

What we want from food, this survey would suggest, is a better mood. And as psychologically-oriented functional food products are currently limited to 'energy drinks', the

'mood food' market would seem ripe for the picking for innovative food manufacturers.

1 Consumer Perceptions of Functional Foods by Barbara Knox, Helena McCormack and Emma Williams. University of Ulster, Coleraine, Co Londonderry BT52 1SA.

# Water allowed at school!

Food and Mood workshop participant Lori Hilson, mum to Ryan aged 6, is full of praise for the headteacher at her son's school. In an apparently revolutionary initiative, Heather Tozer, head of Stoke Hill First School in Exeter, has decided to allow children access to water throughout the day. So now, at the centre of each table in every classroom can be seen a cluster of plastic water bottles, clearly labelled with each child's name. Top marks for recognising the need for a regular intake of water to avoid poor performance caused by dehydration!

# Food/supplement cupboard

## Help yourself to hemp

Hemp, or *Cannabis sativa*, is one of the most versatile and resourceful plants known to man and has been grown for thousands of years. With the rapidly growing interest in the medicinal properties of hemp it is being touted as the possible new 'wonder drug' of the 21st century. The fruit of the plant – the hemp seeds – is also being described by many as providing a 'super-food' with many uses.

Hemp seeds contain a high proportion of protein (23%) as an amino acid balance ideal for human consumption. Hemp seeds are also high in minerals calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium and sulphur as well as being a useful source of

roughage, with 35% of the seed being fibre. Of particular interest is the hemp seed oil which now seems to be challenging linseed oil as the recommended vegetarian alternative to fish oil.

Hemp oil makes up 34% of the seed. It is low in saturated fats (10%

of the oil) and contains Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) in almost the ideal ratio of 1:3, omega-3 (alpha-linolenic acid) to omega-6 (linoleic acid). This is the ratio for optimum absorbence into the body. Hemp oil also contains almost 2% Gamma Linolenic acid (GLA) which is the main valued content of Evening Primrose Oil.

Hemp seeds are delicious eaten on their own, toasted, and they can also be used to make flour for bread, biscuits, cakes and pasta. Milk, cheese and ice-cream can also be made from hemp seeds and oil.

Hemp oil is a delicious nutty oil and is great in salad dressings or mayonnaise but due to its precious and fragile EFAs it should not be used for frying or cooking.

Both hulled and dehulled seeds are available.

### Hemp oil profile

Source: 'Fats that Heal, Fats that Kill' by Udo Erasmus

Total fat content	35%
Saturated fat	8%
Monounsaturated fat (omega-9, oleic acid)	12%
Polyunsaturated omega-3 (alpha-linolenic acid)	20%
Polyunsaturated omega-6* (linoleic acid)	60%

\*includes up to 2% GLA



THC-free hemp growing in the Sussex countryside



How to have your hemp

## Good mood food

### Crunchy hemp topping (CHT)

Having read about the health-promoting benefits of *Cannabis sativa* (hemp, see above), you can now try for yourself the fruit of this helpful, healthful plant. Below are just two ways to enjoy this tasty and versatile THC-free super-food.

#### Ingredients (serves 2 people)

2 tablespoons crushed/chopped\* hulled hemp seeds  
1 tablespoon chopped\* nuts (e.g. brazil, almond and/or hazelnuts)  
1 tablespoon chopped\* dates

\*Although you can buy nuts and dates ready-chopped, you will need to crush or chop the hemp seeds yourself using an electric (coffee) grinder or hand-blender. If you are buying whole nuts, dried fruit and seeds then you can combine and chop/

blend them all together. (Make sure the dates have their stones removed first!).

#### Method

Simply combine all ingredients and chop/blend together. Sprinkle (or heap!) onto toast, yoghurt, stewed fruit for a delicious and nutritious topping to your food.

You may wish to add an oil of your choice (e.g. hemp and/or olive oil) to the nut/seed/fruit blend and mix together to produce a paste which can then be spread more easily onto bread or crackers.

Hemp seeds are perfectly legal, and do not contain any psychoactive substances. They can be purchased from good health food shops or try mail order e.g. from Motherhemp Ltd, tel: 01323 811909, [www.motherhemp.com](http://www.motherhemp.com).

### Hemp/almond pesto

#### Ingredients

1/2 cup toasted hulled hempseeds  
2/3 cup sliced almonds  
1 bunch of basil  
3 tablespoons hemp oil  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cups grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Crush seeds, almonds, basil, hemp oil, and olive oil to a paste with a pestle in a mortar. Mix in the parmesan. Heat pesto in a pot, being careful not to cook it. Serve this tasty sauce over your favourite pasta. Sufficient for 1½ pounds of pasta. Finely cut tomato cubes add a refreshing taste and colour.

# A tale of two students

**University can be a stressful time. If there are flaws in body chemistry it may well emerge at this time.**

by Margaret Moss

## James

James did well at school, and was admitted to one of the top universities. However, before he started university his house was burgled and the car stolen. That didn't help. A considerable volume of work was demanded of him, and he found this just too much.

He developed obsessive compulsive disorder, with an obsession about sitting down. Since his illness seemed to have been triggered by stress, I decided to ask him to send a urine sample, to check\* for compounds called kryptopyroles which are compounds produced by the body which contain zinc and vitamin B6.

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*When we are stressed we need extra zinc and vitamin B6.*

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When the test result came back, it turned out that there was indeed a raised quantity of kryptopyroles. Since his body was throwing away so much zinc and vitamin B6, there was not enough to provide the brain with what it needed. James was making matters worse with his regular breakfast of All Bran and Weetabix. Phytic acid in the skins of cereals binds to precious minerals like zinc, causing them to be excreted. When we are stressed we need extra zinc and vitamin B6. So this is why illnesses are more likely to occur then.

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*James was not recalling his dreams, which is a sign of vitamin B6 deficiency.*

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Food additives, like tartrazine, can cause increased loss of zinc from the body. Sexual development as a teenager requires a lot of zinc, and it is not unusual for teenagers to develop acne or anorexia at this time, because of zinc deficiency.

Vegetarianism can make matters worse, as vegetarian sources of zinc come together with phytic acid, unlike the zinc in meat. James was not recalling his dreams, which is a sign of vitamin B6 deficiency.

I asked James to take a very good multivitamin/mineral, which contains vitamin B6, and vitamin B2. Vitamin B6 does not work, unless there is enough magnesium and vitamin B2. He took an extra B complex supplement as well. He also started taking magnesium, a mineral that helps us feel calm, and zinc tablets with lunch and at night. Zinc is best absorbed at bedtime. He agreed to change his diet, and consented to have figs at breakfast instead of bran.

James' original psychiatrist had given him a drug that apparently caused tardive dyskinesia, a condition similar to Parkinson's Disease. The new psychiatrist agreed to reduce the drug. Meanwhile James took manganese, to help deal with this new symptom. He also agreed to take fish oil, as this is important for the brain. We chose a brand of fish oil\*\* that Greenpeace had found to be clean, as some fish oil contains significant amounts of nasty chemicals.

A year after starting nutritional treatment, James is doing well and the family is able to relax again.

## Mark

Mark was sectioned during his third year, and schizophrenia was diagnosed.

Mark also did well at school, until he had disappointing grades at A level. He took a year out of university, to pay off his debts, and resit exams. During that year he became psychotic, with delusions and anger. Mark was sectioned during his third year, and schizophrenia was diagnosed.

After a few months, he went back to university, to repeat the year. He came to see me last Christmas and I asked him to change his diet. He had to avoid the gluten grains, alcohol, sugar,

caffeine, additives, milk, yoghurt, kidney beans, chickpeas, spinach, rhubarb, tuna, chilli and beef. He had to reduce his fried food, lamb, olive oil, and foods high in boron. However, I did give him a long list of foods he could eat, and some simple recipes.

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*He had to avoid the gluten grains, alcohol, sugar, caffeine, additives, milk, yoghurt, kidney beans, chickpeas, spinach, rhubarb, tuna, chilli and beef.*

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Mark's kryptopyrole test was normal, but another test\* showed that his blood histamine level was low. This was a little surprising, as Mark suffers with hayfever. However, people with hayfever do not always have high blood histamine. Mark worked hard to keep up his special diet at university, and agreed to take vitamins B3 and C, to raise his blood histamine level. He also takes fish oil, magnesium and a good multivitamin and mineral tablet. He passed all his midyear exams the first time, and was recently awarded a second class honours degree. We are really proud of him.

These stories show that nutrition is a very powerful tool for mental health. Both students were prepared to accept a new diet, and both received lots of support from home. Diet, supplements, and support from friends and family can together make a lot of difference.

It would be wonderful if student health centres would learn about kryptopyroles, and the effects of histamine on the brain. Perhaps one day?

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\*The tests Margaret used are only available through a medically qualified practitioner.

\*\*The fish oil Margaret used was the high potency EPA from Lamberts which is available only through a healthcare practitioner. Two other suppliers of fish oil who sell direct to the public are listed under Research Bites on page 8.

## Manic depression self-help

Thank you so much for travelling ... to speak to our Camden MDF Group ... your practical advice was pitched exactly right, so that we were able to take away enough basic guidelines, together with most encouraging examples on what can help people to remain more stable by eating the right food.

Your workshop was another enlightening experience to demonstrate how education and self-help is a workable practicality for manic depressive sufferers. I am sure you will appreciate how important it is to dispel the feeling of impotence and isolation that so many MD sufferers endure. It was a happy, productive and empowering evening in every way. Thank you!

JS  
Camden Manic Depression  
Fellowship Group

## From the email group

**Here are a couple of messages that have been posted on the food and mood email website in the last few weeks . If you'd like to reply to these or to see other group member's messages then please visit the group homepage at [www.smartgroups.com/groups/foodandmood](http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/foodandmood)**

## Meusli to the rescue

I have just joined the group and I wanted to say hello to all other members. I have just finished reading Amanda's book *The Food and Mood Handbook* at it was a revelation. I have suffered from OCD [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder] and associated depression since I was 13, which is pretty much under control now but I have really begun to look at my diet lately. I have been vegetarian now for 15 years. I was pretty shocked to read that I have not been having any omega 3 in my diet for all of that time – something which is important for

being mentally healthy. I've now started having walnuts and linseeds on my muesli every morning and it's really tasty! I also need to lose some weight and am hoping that this new way of eating that I have been practising over the last 2 weeks will stop those sugar and pasta binges!

Nicky

## Has anyone tried carob?

I was wondering, has anyone tried carob? I'm not sure whether to try carob or diabetic chocolate. My sugar level has been going a bit crazy of late and I've been told to cut out as many sugar products as I can and replace them with 'natural' sugar. But I need my chocolate! Why is it that everything I like to eat has sugar in it??

Amanda, thanks for writing *The Food and Mood Handbook*. I've only dipped in and out of it but am amazed to see how many of my symptoms are caused by what I eat. It has been most helpful. And the stronger I get, the more of it I am able to read and the more it helps. Thanks.

Fee

## News

# A calming cuppa?

A cup of tea is generally not as stimulating as a cup of coffee – but this may not be due solely to tea's lower caffeine content.

Japanese scientists have noticed that the caffeine taken within tea has a different effect than when consumed as pure caffeine, such as in pill form. The reason for tea's relatively calming effect is thought to be due to the presence in tea of a natural substance called theanine. Theanine, an amino acid, is a caffeine antagonist and by increasing the action of brain-calming chemical called GABA, it counteracts some of the stimulatory effects of the caffeine that's found in tea.

Source: *Nutri News*, November 2001.

## Webwatch

Don't forget:  
[www.foodandmood.org](http://www.foodandmood.org)

<http://www.glutenfree.co.uk>

Mail order gluten free food.

<http://www.goodfooddelivery.co.uk>

Mail order food, including gluten free.

<http://depressionalliance.org>

A UK charity offering help to people with depression, run by sufferers themselves.

<http://www.mindout.net>

An active campaign to stop the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health.

<http://www.rxlist.com>

Search for information on more than 4,500 popular drugs written in plain English.

<http://www.gsdl.com/autism>

Great Smokies Diagnostic Laboratory's Autism Resource Center for information and resources.

<http://www.drmyhill.co.uk/>

Dr Sarah Myhill is a GP and champion of environmental medicine. Her website offers information and also laboratory tests to allow people to diagnose and manage their own medical problems. Her aim is to look for causes of disease and treat by addressing that cause, be it infectious, allergic, nutritional or toxic, or a combination.

## Book corner

### Natural Highs

by Patrick Holford and Dr Hyla Cass  
published by Piatkus Books (Sept 2001)  
price £14.99 (320 pages, hardback)



UK nutrition guru, Holford, has teamed up with Cass, a US psychiatrist, to produce a manual for mental health. A good mood, sharpened mind and energetic body are all attainable without having to experience the inevitable downside of using sugar, stimulants and, perhaps, street-drugs. The idea is, instead, to use apparently non-addictive but mildly mind-altering substances such as Kava Kava and Sceletium – herbs used by tribal peoples of the Amazon, Africa and Pacific Islands. Combine these with amino-acids, the building blocks for the brain's neurotransmitters, and various vitamin co-factor nutrients and you have one solution to the stresses and strains of 21st century living. The authors recommend that achieving the optimum 'high' also involves a certain amount of lifestyle modification, such as daily breathing and yoga exercises, plus the usual requirement to cut down on caffeine, sugar and alcohol. Stock up your CD collection with the necessary stimulating and relaxing sounds, then select the appropriate aromatherapy oils – and you should be well away! Enjoy!

Patrick Holford has recently completed a UK lecture tour promoting *Natural Highs* and the new supplement range, produced to accompany the authors' recommendations. Further information is available at [www.naturallyhigh.co.uk](http://www.naturallyhigh.co.uk).

### Brain Food

by Lorraine Perretta (with recipes by Oona van den Berg)  
published by Hamlyn (Sept 2001)  
price £14.99 (128 pages, paperback)



An attractive and accessible introduction to the effects of nutrition on the brain with chapters that focus on foods that enhance and deplete mental functioning, memory, IQ, stress and depression. Lots of colourful photos to accompany the delicious recipes that illustrate the sound advice. Contains a useful glossary of technical terms. (See also extract, pages 1-2 this issue).

## food and mood

The Food and Mood Project was started in 1998 with a Millennium Award from Mind, the mental health charity. The aim of the Project is to empower individuals to explore the relationship between diet, nutrition and emotional and mental health, and to share this information with others.

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## Talks and workshops

These are an opportunity to explore the relationship between what you eat and how you feel with Amanda Geary, founder of the Food and Mood Project

Saturday 2nd February 2002 1.30pm-5pm (Workshop)  
hosted by: Brighton Natural Health Centre  
venue: BNHC, 27 Regent Street, Brighton BN1 1UL  
cost: £15  
open to: the general public  
bookings/further information: Brighton Natural Health Centre 01273 600010

• If you can't travel to this venue and would like to host a Food and Mood talk or workshop in your area please contact Amanda on 01273 478108.

## Food and Mood newsletter

Next (spring) issue out March 2002

Deadline for contributions 31st January 2002

## Research bites

### Quality evidence for fish oil in the treatment of schizophrenia

**Research into the use of fish oil and mental illness is now looking into which component of fish oil may be of particular benefit to those with symptoms of schizophrenia. A high quality trial based at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield has just produced some convincing evidence.**

45 people with diagnoses of schizophrenia who were taking antipsychotic medication but still experiencing symptoms recently took part in a high quality experiment known as a

'randomised double blind placebo controlled trial'. In addition to their medication, one third of those taking part received capsules containing 2g of one type of fish oil called EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), another third took 2g of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and the remaining third took dummy capsules (the placebo) containing – unknown to them – 2g of corn oil only. To prevent expectations affecting the results, neither the experimenters nor the volunteers knew which type of capsule they were taking.

The results were conclusive: within three months (the duration of the experiment) the fish oil supplements were found to improve symptoms of schizophrenia in a significant majority of those taking part. Not only that, but fish oil supplements containing a higher amount of EPA proved to be more effective than fish oil supplements that were higher in DHA.

*'Two Double-Blind Placebo-Controlled Pilot Studies of Eicosapentaenoic Acid in the Treatment of Schizophrenia'*  
Peet M, Brind J, Ramchand CN, Shah S, Vankar GK, Schizophrenia Res, 2001;49:243-251.