

The **SOLUTION** *source*

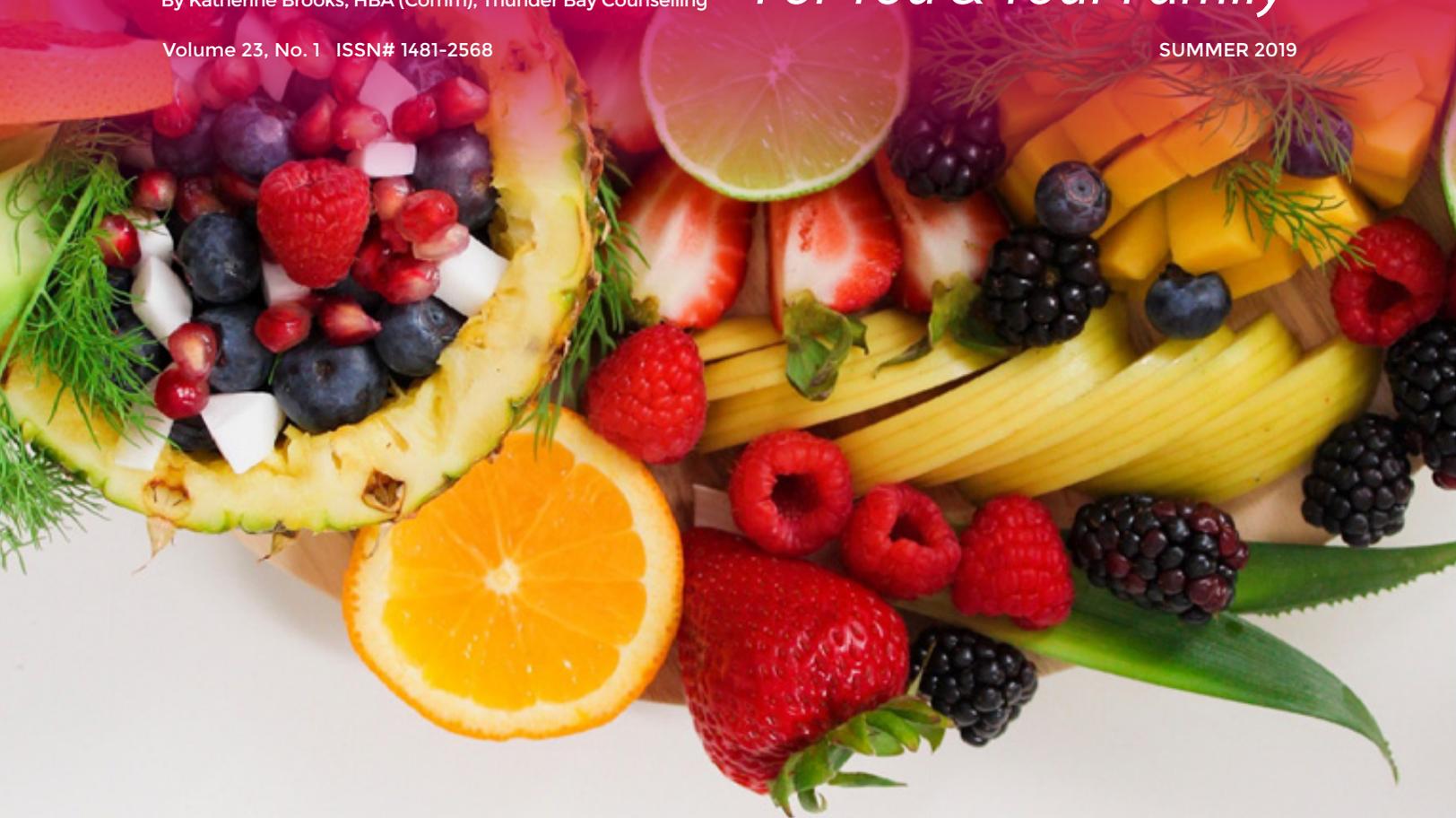
Thunder Bay Counselling Newsletter

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For You & Your Family

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THE FOOD YOU EAT AFFECTS BOTH YOUR PHYSICAL
HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH.**

You can better improve your mental health through your everyday
meals by making small changes over time.

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EATING AND IMPROVING

What goes in is what comes out. Eating to improve your mental health does not require you to empty all your cupboards. What is important is to look at your nutrition and see where you can slowly make changes to increase important vitamins and micronutrients for your brain. Food fuels physical energy and mental functions. The work you put into your nutrition can positively change and even prevent some mental health problems while also improving your physical health.

Relationships with food and nutrition are different for everyone. Food may be a difficult subject or may be something you have not thought about; either way, it is important to notice and take a healthy look at your nutritional habits. This does not happen quickly and sometimes takes work in other areas of your life to improve this one. Change in moderation is the best way to improve your diet without disrupting other parts of your life. Along with professional support, mental health nutrition can help you positively change your wellbeing. ■



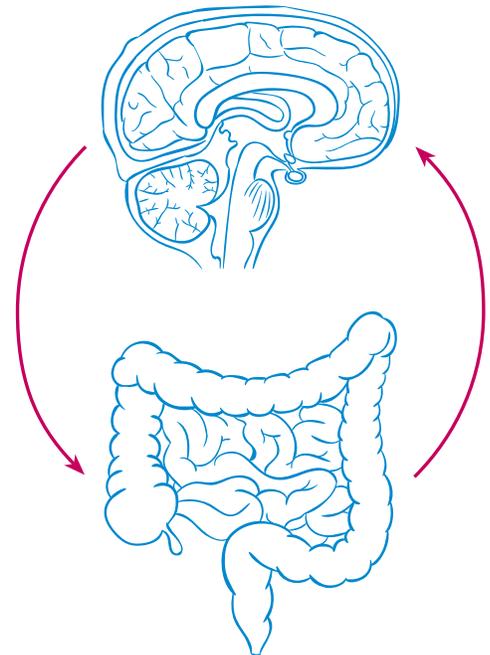
One of nutrition's most important contributions to mental health is the maintenance of the structure and function of [the brain]

– Dietitians of Canada, *The Role of Nutrition in Mental Health Promotion and Prevention (1)*.



FROM THE BELLY TO THE BRAIN

The understanding of the connection between mental health and nutrition is growing.



The link between belly and brain is studied around the world by psychologists and nutritional experts. This link is called the gut-brain axis. A study by University Sapienza and the Scientific Institute of Gastroenterology in Italy uses the gut-brain axis to describe how the digestive system is linked to the brain through the nervous system. This communication connection runs both ways. Meaning what you digest goes to your brain and what your mind thinks can go to your intestines, which is why some mental health issues can also cause digestive problems. Caring for one can help care for the other. ■

IMPORTANT VITAMINS

Eating for your mental health means getting a good balance of protein, fats and carbohydrates along with key vitamins and nutrients. These vitamins and nutrients are in many of our foods including:

FATTY ACIDS:

(With Omega 3s)

- Fish: salmon, tuna
- Seeds: chia, sesame, flax
- Nuts: walnut

MINERALS:

(Zinc, Magnesium, Selenium, Copper, Iron)

- Fish: salmon, tuna, shrimp
- Legumes: beans, chickpeas, lentils
- Seeds & nuts: sesame, almonds, walnuts
- Leafy greens: spinach, cabbage, romaine lettuce, microgreens
- Fruit: bananas, raspberries, avocado

B VITAMINS:

(Folate, B6, B12)

- Eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt
- Fish: salmon, trout
- Leafy greens: kale, collard greens

ANTIOXIDANTS:

(Vitamin C and E)

- Greens: leafy greens, broccoli or cauliflower
- Potato: Sweet or white
- Sunflower seeds
- Red pepper (raw)
- Goose meat

By transitioning your diet to wholesome foods, these important nutrients will be in what you eat while fueling your body and tasting great too. When deciding what to eat it is important to eat a natural rainbow of foods over your day. This means fruit, vegetables, proteins and grains of all different colours. Try new foods to add colour to your plate like yellow beets, red carrots or purple cauliflower. The new Canadian Food Guide is a great place to learn how to fill your plate and your belly. The Guide can be found online at www.canada.ca - just search "food guide". ■



TIPS FOR EATING HEALTHY

How you eat throughout your day can also affect the way you feel. Here are some tips that will benefit your mental health:

- 1. Eat regularly.** Try not to skip meals, even if your schedule demands you to have a quick refuel. If you skip meals your blood sugar will decrease making you feel tired, run down and can increase anxiety and depression symptoms.
- 2. Plan ahead.** Planning your meals ahead can ensure you eat healthy, balanced meals throughout the week. This will allow you to plan around your busy schedule and budget your spending too.
- 3. Eat together.** Having an eating routine with others can help regulate your digestive system and calm your mind, as you are eating in a safe and comfortable space. The support of your friends and family being together is also great for your mental health!
- 4. Reduce caffeine.** You don't have to give up your morning coffee entirely but try to limit your caffeine throughout the day. After the energy boost your body will feel more tired, dehydrated and this can increase symptoms of some mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Try to switch out sugary or caffeinated drinks with herbal tea, 100% fruit juices, or try water with cut fruit and herbs for added flavour. ■



SALMON BURGERS WITH CREAMY SLAW

This recipe contains a wide range of vitamins and nutrients that will help fuel your brain and body.

SALMON BURGER:

- 340g of cooked salmon (fresh and cooked or canned)
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp fresh chopped chives (or 1 Tbsp dried)
- 2 Tbsp fresh chopped dill or parsley (or 1 Tbsp dried)
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- Olive oil for pan-frying

CREAMY CABBAGE SLAW:

- 1 head green cabbage, shredded
- 1 cup plain Greek Yogurt
- 2-3 Tbsp white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ cup fresh chopped chives (or 2 Tbsp dried)
- ¼ cup fresh chopped dill or parsley (or 2 Tbsp dried)
- A drizzle of olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Salmon Burgers:** Flake (and drain if using canned) salmon apart in bowl. Mix all burger ingredients together and form into 4 patties. In pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Fry the burgers for 3 minutes a side or until crispy and golden brown. Remove from pan and place on paper towel. Sprinkle lightly with salt.
- **Slaw:** Apart from the cabbage, mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Add cabbage and mix together. Taste and adjust if needed.

Serve these hot salmon burgers on a bed of creamy slaw. Feel free to top with extra yogurt and herbs. ■

This recipe is taken from Pinch of Yum healthy food blog.



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