

SNACK TIME

Having been a part of Australian lunchboxes for over 25 years, the team at Uncle Tobys know what they're doing. Their bars have recently had the fibre intake increased, plus they're low GI and contain natural flavours and colours.

These Chewy Apple & Blackcurrant muesli bars are \$3.99 from all major supermarkets.



ON THE RUN

Busy mums will love La Zuppa soups, now available in four new flavours. They're all 99 percent fat free and made from fresh vegetables. Just pop the soup into the microwave for two minutes and voila - dinner is served. The rest of your family will want one too! For \$3.79 from all leading supermarkets.



THE BIG QUESTION

WHICH FOODS CAN HELP LIFT MY MOOD?

Just like the heart, stomach and liver, the brain is acutely sensitive to foods we eat. Research shows eating certain foods can improve our mental wellbeing and even help manage depression.

According to one UK study, 88 percent of participants reported that changing their diet improved their mental health. Increasing the amount of "supporter" foods like vegetables, fruits, oil-rich fish, wholegrain foods, nuts, seeds and water helped improve their mood. Cutting down on "stressor" foods, such as refined sugar, caffeine and alcohol also contributed to a better frame of mind.

No-one feels great all the time, however a diet rich in certain foods can help add a little rose colour to your glasses. So at times when you're feeling lower than a snake's belly, try super charging your daily diet with these "feel-good" nutrition gems:

Omega-3 fats Essential for normal brain function, studies show that getting more omega-3's (a type of polyunsaturated fat) in your diet can boost your mood and even help battle depression. Oily fish like salmon, sardines and tuna are great sources of omega-3 fats, so aim to eat at least two serves of fish every week.

Folic acid A B-group vitamin that aids in the production of serotonin, a feel-good chemical in the brain. Folic acid deficiency causes serotonin levels in the brain to decrease, which may trigger depression. Folate is abundant in green vegetables like spinach, broccoli, asparagus and peas, and legumes, nuts and oranges.

Fibre Exerts a positive effect on a person's mood. In a four-week study, half of the volunteers were given 40g of high-fibre cereal daily while the rest had a "normal" breakfast. The cereal eaters had better mental functions and were less depressed. Get out on the sunny side of bed with a high-fibre breakfast cereal, wholegrain toast or wholemeal crumpets/English muffins.

My Child's nutrition expert Vanessa Schuldt is an accredited practising dietitian. Visit nutritionsspeak.com.au for more.



SMOOTH SAILING

This Only Organic First Cereal, designed for four-to six-month-old babies, is made from wholegrain organic baby rice that is ground ultra fine. It includes thiamin (Vitamin B1), and has no artificial flavours, preservatives or colours. Available for \$3.65 from specialty health stores. See onlyorganic.com.au.

FIVE WAYS TO MAKE MEALTIMES FUN

61%

OF CHILDREN SAY MILK TASTES BETTER WHEN IT COMES IN A MCDONALD'S CUP!

- 1 ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO HELP SET THE TABLE** This promotes a positive pre-meal routine that gives him a clear signal of what's to come next.
 - 2 TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING** Explain why you are setting the table, what meal it is, what type of food you'll be eating, and the colour and shape of the food.
 - 3 OFFER OPTIONS** Give him the opportunity to select his own bowl, cup or perhaps a favourite placemat (pop out and buy one together if it will encourage him).
 - 4 PREPARE THE MEAL TOGETHER** Where possible, offer your child an opportunity to assist in the preparation - tearing the salad leaves or pouring sauce.
 - 5 USE INDIVIDUAL SERVING BOWLS** Present food in individual bowls and use appropriate utensils, such as small tongs and ice-cream scoops. He will feel important as he will be able to help himself to food that appeals to him.
- Ourlittletreasure.com.au offers helpful information for parents and carers.*

