



With Pride

Inclusive Integrated Healthcare

In clinic & online services

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

WHAT IS FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE

This is our bodies way of preparing us to either stay and fight in a situation, run from it or freeze, triggering a cascade of physiological reactions in the body including the release of adrenaline.

This can otherwise be termed as the sympathetic nervous system kicking in getting you ready to protect yourself, stimulating the adrenals and releasing catecholamines.

Once this reaction starts you may feel; your heart rate increase, breathing may become quick and shallow and your blood pressure may rise, during this time most other metabolic processes are put to a halt like digestion and the immune system for example.

So, you can see how long-term stress and heightened anxiety can impact upon our overall health on a physiological and mental health level.

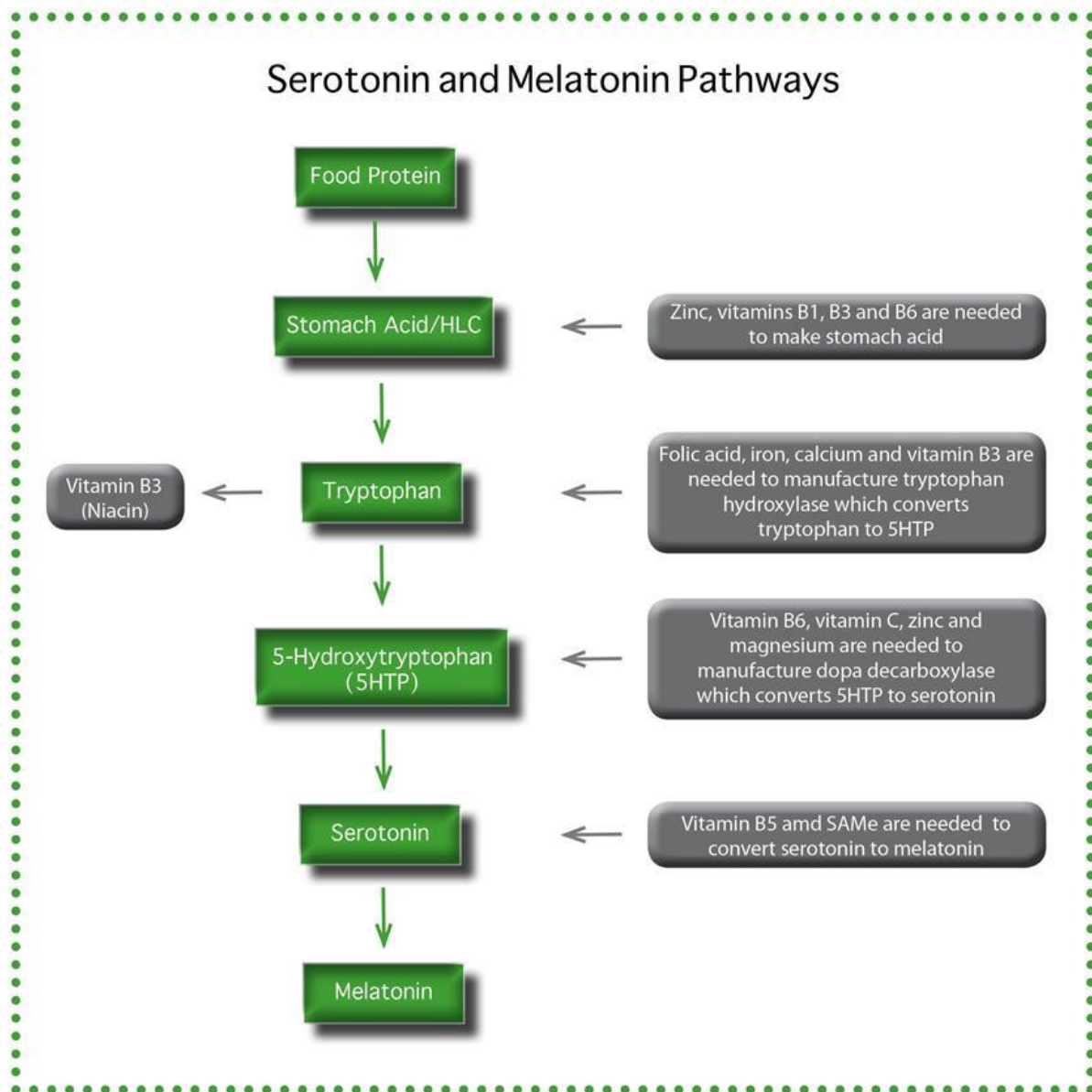
NUTRITION FOR HEALTHY NEUROTRANSMITTER PRODUCTION AND REGULATION

Serotonin is responsible for assisting us to feel happier and better able to cope with stress in our lives, and gamma-Amino butyric acid (GABA) is responsible for reducing the stress response and anxiety, and adversely Glutamate is known to be excitatory and is higher in states of anxiety, here GABA levels would be lower.

The production of these neurotransmitters are reliant on consuming a wholefood diet including particularly vitamins; B1, B3, B5, B6, C as well as folate, iron, calcium, magnesium, and tryptophan. The nutrients relevant to GABA specifically are zinc, vitamin B6.

As Serotonin is also converted to Melatonin, our sleep hormone it is important that this pathway has all the support it needs to synthesis or produce.

Here is an image that outlines the pathways of how Serotonin is formed in the body.



Therefore, it is recommended you review the following foods for each of these nutrients and incorporate them into your diet where possible.

Particularly focus on including the foods high in zinc and B6 for anxiety states.

As this is an extensive and list of foods I would recommend simply making sure you include at least one food from each nutrient in your daily diet.

See following page for list of foods.

NUTRIENT	FOODS
Vitamin B1 – Thiamin	Black beans, tomatoes, corn flour, pork, adzuki beans, hazlenuts, oat flour, kidney beans & soy milk.
Vitamin B3 – Niacin	Peanuts, tuna, pork, turkey, barley flour, lam & portabello mushrooms
Vitamin B5 – pantothenic acid	Turkey, tomatoes, broccoli, wholegrains, potatoes, beef & chicken
Vitamin B6 – Pyroxidine	Turkey, rice bran, acai berry, pistachios, sunflower seeds, chicken breast, tuna, prune juice, squash & bluefish
Vitamin C	Red capsicum, kiwi fruit, brussel sprouts, strawberries and oranges (organic)
Folate	Lentils, asparagus, pinto beans, sunflower seeds, leafy green vegetables
Iron	Canned clams, parsley, pinto beans, fish, chicken, eggs, red meats, pork, wholegrains, dark green leafy vegetables. Spinach must be heating in order for the iron to be bioavailable for absorption.
Calcium	Sardines, tofu, almonds, dairy, sesame seeds, turnip greens, kale and broccoli.
Magnesium	Cashews, artichokes, pinto beans, halibut (fish), banana
Zinc	Oysters, adzuki beans, pumpkin seeds, whey protein, sunflower seeds, blackbeans, swisse cheese,
Tryptophan	Turkey breast, egg white (consume whole egg), soybeans, pumpkin seeds, seaweed, spirulina and beef

DIGESTIVE HEALTH AND NEUROTRANSMITTER PRODUCTION

It is now understood that whilst the above processes are imperative for our neurotransmitter health a significant amount of our Serotonin is synthesised (created/produced) from the healthy bacteria that is present in our digestive system.

Therefore, looking after the health of your digestive system through incorporating pre and probiotics is also linked with good mental health.

A pre-biotic is the foods that the bacteria feed on and a probiotic is the bacteria itself.

Some foods that you can consume to ensure good digestive health are as follows;

PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are live microorganisms which, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host.

Some of the other potential benefits alongside health neurotransmitters include:

Synthesizing vitamins, boosting your immune system, decreasing allergies (particularly in regard to skin complaints), decreasing the risk of dental caries, reducing weight, speeding recovery from bacterial vaginosis, reducing the problems associated with inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome, reducing symptoms of diarrhoea associated with antibiotic usage or acute illness and improving mental health.

FRESH SAUERKRAUT



TEMPEH



MISO



SOY SAUCE



KEFIR



COTTAGE CHEESE



YOGHURT (greek)



KAMBUCHA



PREBIOTICS

Prebiotics are non-digestible substances that feed the probiotics, helping them to thrive in the digestive tract. Not all probiotics consumed will survive, so it is important to consume prebiotics with probiotics.

CHICORY ROOT



ARTICHOKE



WHOLEGRAIN
FOODS



BARLEY



OATMEAL



ONION & GARLIC



LEGUMES



LEAFY GREENS



RYE



FLAX



LEEKs



BERRIES



BANANAS



HONEY



ASPARAGUS



GARLIC



OTHER TIPS FOR REDUCING ANXIETY

CREATE YOUR SELF-CARE TOOLBOX

Make a pledge to yourself to spend 15 minutes a day using self-care tools to prevent stress becoming heightened and detrimental to your overall wellbeing.

You may find a few activities in this list that stand out to you that you want to try, but sometimes even making that decision of what to do can be difficult. It is recommended that you write these activities on small pieces of card and place them in a bowl or small box at home, this way when its hard to decide you can simply draw one out randomly and utilise that tool for the day.

SELF-CARE TOOLBOX IDEAS

Meditation

Meditation calms the mind, body and spirit. Whilst you can simply use relaxing music and the deep breathing technique below there are also many apps and YouTube videos to help you through guided meditations. The Smiling Mind app is highly recommended and is free.

Yoga

This doesn't have to be by attending a class, there are many YouTube videos and DVD's available for home-based practice.

Mindful walking

Taking a stroll for 15 minutes and observing your environment, particularly nature can be a great way to become present if you are not feeling you can sit still and engage in direct meditation. You may like to couple this with the sensory experience tool below.

Sensory experience

This tool is simply sitting and acknowledging with what you see, hear, taste, and touch. You may like to sit somewhere still and work through the senses one and a time and repeating until you have reached 15 minutes.

Deep breathing

Breathe in for at least 7 seconds, hold your breathe for 4 seconds and finally exhale for 10 seconds or as long as you can. This will slow your breathing and automatically start kicking in a state of calm.

Listening to relaxation music in a quiet space

Instrumentals are best as lyrics can become distracting and invoke too much thinking, the aim is to get lost in the music.

Gratitude journaling

Sometimes when we are stressed it is easy to focus on the negative and become our own worst enemies, writing down at least 3 things a day that you are grateful for starts retraining the brain to notice what we are blessed with rather than just what we find stressful.

Grounding

The best way to ground yourself is to go outside in the dirt or sand barefoot. You may like to stand in silence with your eyes closed or have some relaxation music on at the same time, incorporate the deep breathing technique above. Grounding can bring balance, leaving you more centred, and less stressed.

Getting creative

Anything creative brings the mind directly into the present moment, this can be another form of mindfulness meditation. It doesn't matter what it is that you are creatively engaging in however some ideas are; writing, painting, colouring, sewing and sketching.

Gentle exercise

This could be walking dancing, swimming or anything else that does not get your heart rate up too high.

Whilst these are self-care tools you can use independently, please don't discount the importance of connection with your community during times of stress, even if that is only via video calls for now, whilst we can be so busy that it just seems like another thing to do to pick up the phone to talk about it we all know we end up coping better and managing our worlds with much more patience when we have shared with a friend or family member.

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