



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLNESS

Change Your Food, Boost Your Mood

Can eating the right foods really have a positive impact on your mood? Research has shown that eating the right food can noticeably boost your mood and help you feel more positive.

The body communicates with the brain by sending chemical signals that trigger certain responses. Different types of food we eat send different chemical signals to the brain, which can change your mood, ranging from feelings of relaxation to providing you with energy and motivation.

Food for relaxation:

Carbohydrates increase the chemicals in the brain associated with our feelings of appetite, pleasure, calmness and relaxation. Eating a high-carbohydrate meal or snack will increase these brain chemicals improv-



ing our appetite and mood.

Good choices of carbohydrates that will enhance feelings of pleasure, calmness, relaxation and control appetite are:

- All fruits and vegetables, particularly bananas, avocados, blue-red plums, dates, eggplants, papayas, passion fruit, pineapples, tomatoes, potatoes.
- All grain products, particularly whole-grain breads, cereals, rice, pasta.

Remember eating well will not only improve your overall health but will provide your brain with the nutrients it needs to function properly. Although food is one way to help improve your mood, there are many healthy lifestyle changes such as physical activity that can boost your energy and contribute to relaxation.

(Information adapted from: "Nutrition & Recovery" by Trish Dekker, M. Ed, RD (2000). Centre for Addictions and Mental Health).

Did you know?

In 2009, Health Canada reported that in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties:

- 71.2% of individuals over 18 years perceived their own mental health as very good or excellent.
- 8.2% of individuals over 18 years have a diagnosed mood disorder.
- 23.1% of individuals over 18 years had perceived life stress.

Energy boosting foods:

A meal or snack of protein and carbohydrates will increase brain chemicals which trigger brain cells to boost energy, attention and alertness. If you are looking to increase your energy, try the following protein foods:

- Fish, such as water-packed tuna, shellfish like oysters, shrimp and clams
- Chicken.
- Lean meat.
- Legumes such as peas and beans.
- Low-fat cottage cheese, yogurt, low-fat hard cheese.
- Skim milk, 1% milk, tofu and eggs.



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Being Active To Improve Mental Health



Top 5 Activities Reported by Canadians

1. Walking
2. Gardening, yard work
3. Home exercise
4. Swimming
5. Bicycling

Physical activity can make you feel good and feel good about yourself. Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living recommends that to achieve health benefits, adults need to accumulate 30-60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. However, in 2009, less than half the population over 18 years in Haldimand and Norfolk were active enough to benefit from the mental and physical benefits regular physical activity can provide (Statistics Canada, 2009).

The Canadian Mental Health Association reports that symptoms associated with mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression, can be improved through regular physical activity. During physical activity, our brain produces endorphins, which are chemicals that provide relief from stress and pain. It is important to

remember that for individuals living with a mental health conditions, physical activity alone is often not enough. However, people may find it useful either as a self-help strategy or in addition to other forms of treatment.

Benefits of being active:

- Helps to maintain independence.
- Provides a sense of accomplishment.
- Improves self-esteem and body image.
- Releases muscle tension and improve sleep.
- Provides positive social interactions.
- Contributes to relaxation and reduced stress.

High-intensity exercise is not necessary to achieve these benefits. Engaging in physical activity at a moderate intensity – brisk walking, swimming, or cycling – appears to be effective at improving

psychological well-being. Due to busy lives, many people don't have the time to exercise. According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, the trick is to make physical activity part of your daily routine at home, at work or along the way. Here are a few activities to get you going:

- Aim to be physically active for 30 minutes each day.
- Replace your coffee break at work with 10-minute walk.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park your car in the furthest spot from where you are going.
- Play actively with your kids.

Carrot and Ginger Soup

Ingredients

3 cups	750 mL	water
2		cloves garlic, crushed
4 cups	1 L	sliced carrots
½ cup	125 mL	chopped onion
1 tbs	15 mL	vegetable bouillon powder
2 tsp	10 mL	pure maple syrup
1 tsp	5 mL	curry powder
½ tsp	2 mL	grated gingerroot
1½ cups	375 mL	milk

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time:

45 to 50 minutes



1. In a large saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add garlic, carrots, onion, bouillon powder, maple syrup, curry powder and ginger; return to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 40 to 45 minutes or until carrots are tender. Remove from heat.
2. Working in batches, transfer soup to blender and puree on high speed until smooth.
3. Return soup to saucepan and add milk. Heat over low heat. Do not boil or milk will curdle.

Freezer friendly / kid approved

Recipe reprinted with permission of Dietitians of Canada from *Simply Great Food*, published by Robert Rose Inc., 2007 www.dietitians.ca/eatwell

Walking builds strong sense of community

For years, our grandparents told us that people used to be friendlier and looked out for one another back in the old days. Now, new research suggests they're right.

Older neighbourhoods, where you could walk from your home to the store or park, created a stronger sense of community because they were built for walking. When you're out walking, it's natural to be more in touch with your neighbours and what's going on.

Many people move to the suburbs to get away from the bustle of the city and have more space. But according to the Ontario College of Family Physicians, urban sprawl has serious effects on people's physical and mental health. People who live in the suburbs often have to commute long distances to and from work, and more driving time means less time with family and friends.

Studies in the United States suggest that long-term commuting leaves people feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Commuting is also associated with back pain, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and headaches.

Women, in particular, experience more significant stress in sprawling, poorly planned communities that lack access to public transit and amenities, especially if they are balancing full-time jobs with long commutes with taking care of children and aging parents. So, choosing to walk or cycle instead of driving can improve mental health and counteract the negative effects of driving. But that can only happen if people and community leaders work together to create more walkable communities. To make your neighbourhood more walkable, you could walk or cycle someplace to which you'd normally drive.

For more information about the iCANwalk project and tips on how to make your neighbourhood more walkable, visit www.icanwalk.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September:

- Sept. 13 – Terry Fox Run (Simcoe)
- Sept. 27 – Trail Day, launch of new Norfolk Sunrise Trail (1 p.m. Simcoe)

October:

- Oct. 4 – Run for the Cure (Simcoe)
- Oct. 4 to 10 – Mental Illness Awareness Week
- Oct. 5 to Nov. 1 – Canada's Healthy Workplace Month
- Oct. 6 – Step Up to a Healthier You – Delhi Stroke Prevention classes start
- Oct. 8 – Step Up to a Healthier You – Caledonia Stroke Prevention classes start
- Oct. 10 – Suicide Prevention Day
- Oct. 14 – Prenatal Health Fair (Simcoe)



Step up to a *Healthier* you

**FREE • 4-Week Educational Series • This October
in Delhi and Caledonia • REGISTER TODAY!**

**Learn how to reduce your risk
for stroke and other chronic
diseases.**

Learn about:

- healthy eating
- food labels
- how to reduce your risk of high blood pressure and cholesterol
- becoming more physically active
- how to quit smoking
- managing stress

For registration, contact Anna Glowala,
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Class Location:
Delhi United Church
105 Church St. W.
Delhi, ON N4B 1V9

Date and Time:
Oct. 6 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Oct. 13 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Oct. 20 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Oct. 27 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Class Location:
*Royal Canadian
Legion, Caledonia Branch* 154
29 Caithness St. E.
Caledonia, ON N3W 1B7

Date and Time:
Oct. 8 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Oct. 15 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Oct. 22 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Oct. 29 6:30-9:00 p.m.