



# Feel Good Foods

Your gastrointestinal tract is lined with a hundred million neurons – the same stuff that’s in your brain! This means your digestive system doesn’t just help you to process food, it also helps monitor your emotions. The function of those nerve cells and the natural production of serotonin are influenced by the billions of bacteria lining your intestinal tract. According to the Harvard Medical School, these bacteria are important to your health because they:

- Protect the lining of intestines and ensure a barrier against toxins and harmful bacteria
- Limit inflammation
- Improve how well nutrients are absorbed from food
- Activate neural pathways that travel directly between the gut and brain

One way to add these “good” bacteria to your diet is to eat high-quality dairy, such as unsweetened yogurt, or to take a probiotic supplement. Many unprocessed foods are fermented and act as natural probiotics. Fermented foods (such as kimchi) can affect the degree of inflammation in your body and even improve your mood and energy levels. Studies have shown that people who regularly eat or supplement with probiotics can improve their mental outlook, perception of stress and anxiety levels.

## Ways to Support Brain Health Through Nutrition

- Follow a healthy and balanced diet, such as the Mediterranean diet.
- Reduce intake of added sugar and processed foods.
- Adequately hydrate with water.
- Reduce intake of caffeine, and alcohol and use of tobacco products.
- Eat food rich in folate, such as spinach, lentils and chickpeas.
- Eat complete proteins, such as eggs, peanuts, quinoa, chia seeds and tofu.
- Eat foods rich in vitamin D, such as mushrooms, tuna, salmon and milk.
- Eat foods rich in zinc, such as whole grains, oysters, kale, broccoli, legumes and nuts.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium, such as fish, avocado and dark leafy greens.
- Eat foods rich in vitamin B, such as asparagus, leafy greens, meat and avocado.
- Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as wild-caught salmon and walnuts.
- Eat probiotic-rich foods, such as kefir, yogurt and other fermented foods.



“Nutritional psychiatry: Your brain on food,” Eva Selhub, MD, Harvard Health Publishing, Nov. 16, 2015.

# Social Distancing-Friendly Outdoor Activities

Here are several activities you can enjoy outdoors while continuing to practice safe social distancing:

- Go camping in your backyard: Pitch a tent, start a bonfire, make s'mores, tell stories, and stargaze at night.
- Have a picnic: Pack food from home or pick up takeout and enjoy it at your favorite public park.
- Head to your local trails or around your neighborhood for a walk, run, bike ride or hike.
- If you have a basketball hoop, practice your shooting skills.
- Attend a fitness class held outside (that allows social distancing).
- Learn how to use a map and compass.
- Learn how to navigate the stars.
- Learn how to start a campfire.
- Visit an outdoor farmers market.
- Go to a drive-in movie theatre.
- Practice taking photos of nature.
- Practice your frisbee throws.
- Visit a state park.
- Go bird watching.
- Try geocaching.
- Go golfing.
- Fly a kite.

Did you know that Sept. 26 is *Family Health & Fitness Day*? Celebrate by engaging in some of the outdoor activities listed above with your entire family!



## LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

### Myths vs. Facts

**✗ MYTH:** You can get diabetes from eating too much sugar.

**✓ FACT:** You do not develop type 2 diabetes from eating too much sugar, but the disease is related to sugar. Eating too much sugar can lead to obesity, which is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes.

**✗ MYTH:** You can't eat starchy foods, such as bread, potatoes or pasta, if you have diabetes.

**✓ FACT:** Starchy foods can be eaten as part of a healthy diet, but portion sizes are important when choosing these types of foods.

**✗ MYTH:** Taking diabetes medications means you don't have to watch your diet or exercise.

**✓ FACT:** Type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease; however, it is important to watch your diet and exercise in order to slow the progression as well as the need for more diabetes medications and/or insulin.

**✗ MYTH:** You need to follow a specific, strict diet if you have type 2 diabetes.

**✓ FACT:** There is not a special diet for diabetes. Most individuals with type 2 diabetes should be eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet that includes whole grains, non-starchy vegetables, fruit, lean protein, and

low-fat or non-fat dairy foods. Speak with a registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator for an individualized meal plan.

**✗ MYTH:** If your doctor informs you that you need to start using insulin, it means you are not taking care of your diabetes properly.

**✓ FACT:** For most people, type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease and can typically be controlled with diet and oral medications at first. However, over time, the body typically will produce less of its own insulin, thus the need for you to take insulin.

**✗ MYTH:** Prediabetes is nothing to worry about.

**✓ FACT:** Prediabetes is serious and in fact, about 15% to 30% of people with prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years. Thankfully, this can typically be prevented with a change to a healthier lifestyle, which includes following a well-balanced, nutritious diet, getting physical activity and possibly weight loss. Talk to your physician if you are concerned with prediabetes.

"Safe outdoor activities during the COVID-19 pandemic," Mayo Clinic Staff, Aug. 4, 2020.

"Need a social distancing-friendly activity? Use this time to improve your outdoor skills," Gary Garth, usatoday.com, April 10, 2020.

"Social Distancing Outside: 8 Safe Places to Go and Things to Do," Lyn Mettler, travel.usnews.com, March 20, 2020.

"12 Activities to Do Outside While Still Social Distancing," Houstonia Staff, May 2020.