

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION



Sleep

Physical Activity

Food Choices

FACT SHEET

Sleep and Relaxation

- When you sleep, your body regulates your hormones, which can improve your mood
- Sleeping also helps your memory as information is moved from the short-term memory into the long-term memory.
- The recommended amount of sleep for young people is between 8 and 10 hours per night.
- Your body needs to get a good night's sleep to be able to repair itself and feel energised. Feeling energised can improve your mood and mean you're more able to do things you enjoy.
- Sometimes sleeping can be difficult. In these times, relaxing activities such as having a bath or sitting in the sun can help your mind and mood. Relaxing can help to lower your heart rate and blood pressure, which can lead to feeling less stressed and in a better mood.

Physical Activity

- When you exercise, your body releases hormones called endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals in your brain that make you feel good and boost your mood.
- Exercise sends more blood to the brain, which can help you feel more awake and improve concentration. Having energy and being able to concentrate also make people feel good.
- Most people report feeling happier and having a better mood after they exercise.
- It doesn't have to be vigorous exercise to be beneficial - even just going for a walk can help to boost your mood.
- Exercising with others, such as when playing team sports, can also have benefits for our minds as social activities often improve our mood.

Food Choices

- Eating enough food and eating regularly helps to give us energy, which is good for our concentration and mood.
- The gut is sometimes called the 'little brain' because of its connection to our minds. If you feel stressed and worried, it is common to have an upset stomach. Keeping your gut healthy can therefore be part of keeping a healthy mind. Fibre (found in veggies, fruit and wholegrain foods) helps keep your gut healthy.
- Omega 3 and 6 (which are oils found in nuts, seeds and fish) help to keep your brain working efficiently, which can help to improve your memory and concentration.
- Caffeine can help some people feel more awake and alert, but it can also increase feelings of anxiety.
- Lots of sugary foods can make your blood sugar levels rise and fall quickly, which can lead to mood changes and feeling irritable.