



How to feed your neurotransmitters

Neurotransmitters are the chemical messengers in our brains that allow neurones to communicate with each other. They can affect our sleep, mood, appetite, energy and even heart rate and emotions! We have many different types of neurotransmitters, all which have different functions, but the ones that we can potentially impact based on our diet, include: **acetylcholine, GABA, dopamine and serotonin.**

The jury is still out when it comes to the research surrounding whether what we eat does in fact directly impact our neurotransmitter levels. However, eating a diet based on whole-foods and including fibre, fermented foods and healthy fats is beneficial not only to your neurotransmitter levels but also to your overall health.

As we know, through feeding the bacteria in gut (probiotics) with prebiotics found from different foods, this helps to produce brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which are essential for the brain to regulate mood and cognition.

A narrative review, conducted in 2018 by Briguglio et al., identified the main dietary neurotransmitters and their associated food sources. So while more research is needed to be done around the bioavailability (or absorption) of dietary neurotransmitter intake, eating the following foods may assist in increasing the diversity of prebiotics and therefore, probiotics and postbiotics in your gut.



- **Acetylcholine:** Eggplant, bitter orange, common bean, mung bean, peas, radish, spinach, squash, wild strawberries.
- **GABA:** barley, broccoli, buckwheat, chestnuts, common bean, kale, oat, pea, potato, rice, shiitake, soya bean, spinach, St John's wort, sweet potato, tea, tomato, wheat, wild celery.
- **Dopamine:** Eggplant, avocado, banana, common bean, apple, orange, pea, plantain, spinach, tomato, velvet bean.
- **Serotonin:** Bananas, chicory, Chinese cabbage, coffee powders, green coffee bean, green onion, hazelnut, kiwi, lettuce, paprika, passion fruit, pawpaw, pepper, pineapple, plum, pomegranate, potato, spinach, strawberry, tomato, velvet bean, wild rice.

So next time you do your grocery shop, why not add in a few of the above foods to increase the variety of pre-biotics you consume, and help to fuel the bacteria in your gut!

The information in this factsheet is general advice only. The advice within it may therefore not apply to your circumstances and is not intended to replace more specific advice of a professional.

We would like to thank Centre for Corporate Health (cfch.com.au) for their assistance in the compilation of this factsheet.



The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: cmhaa.org.au

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This resource was produced with the support of Commonwealth Bank

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