

FOOD FOR YOUR MOOD

in early sobriety

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Step 1: Stabilize Blood Sugars

In early sobriety, blood sugars can be more sensitive. This is due to the effect of alcohol and drugs on the liver and pancreas over time. Alcohol takes priority over food to be metabolized in the liver, therefore glucose from food isn't processed properly, and blood sugars can drop. Alcohol can also increase insulin secretion and cause insulin sensitivity over time (which can lead to diabetes). Combine this effect with an inconsistent diet while drinking/using and you may be at risk for more sensitive blood sugar levels. This can make it even more challenging to have a positive mood and stable energy levels throughout the day!

Follow these simple yet CRUCIAL tips in early sobriety to strengthening your mental health and recovery. Did you know having stable blood sugars can help prevent cravings for drugs, alcohol, and prevent sugar cravings? oh yes. sign me up.

- **Eat consistently**– please do not go longer than 4 hours without eating for optimal mood, energy levels, and metabolism. If you're not a breakfast person, now may be the time to introduce a small smoothie, protein shake, yogurt, or a banana/apple with nut butter.
- **Incorporate high quality protein with every meal and snack.** Examples include eggs, greek yogurt, nuts/nut butter, meat, seafood, tofu, beans, seeds (chia, flax, hemp)
- **Fiber is your friend**– not only does it help stabilize blood sugars, fiber keeps you satisfied for longer. Include vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, beans, whole grains, sweet potatoes, oat bran, dates, figs.. Yes please.
- **Include healthy fats**– avocado, nuts, olive or avocado oil, fatty fish, eggs
- **Limit refined sugar**– I know, easier said than done! Especially in early sobriety. But as you eat more substantial, balanced meals, cravings for sugar will subside (Especially if you follow these tips!)

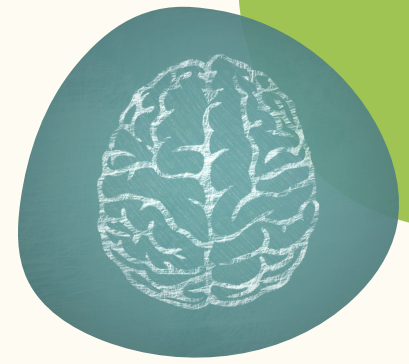
Step 2: Hydrate/ Limit Caffeine

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Has your caffeine intake increased since getting sober? If so– be aware that it is a diuretic. Which means you may need to drink even more water. Being dehydrated is a massive contributor to lethargy, irritability, lack of focus. So this is your gentle reminder to make sure you are drinking **at least half of your body weight in fluid daily.**

Caffeine can also contribute to anxiety and sleep issues, **my recommendation is to stop drinking caffeine by 1pm and drink less than 300mg daily for optimal mood, energy, and nutrient absorption.**





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Feed your Brain

The foods we eat can directly affect the structure and function of our brain. Each meal is an opportunity to help lower inflammation and strengthen gut health which contributes to our mental health. I've listed a few nutrient-dense foods that can help support your mental health, lower inflammation, and also support your body in detoxifying from alcohol and drug use. Here are my **Top 10 Recovery Foods!**

*Note these are not in order of importance. They are suggestions as you fine tune your eating habits and become your new sober, healthy self! I didn't include anything too ambitious like oysters, watercress, or sea moss (although they are fantastic brain foods) because to be honest, I don't prescribe anything I don't also eat on a regular basis. **Aim to include these foods into your diet at least 2-3 times a week.**

- 1) **Fatty Fish (wild salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel, halibut, trout):** omega-3 fatty acids, protein, B vitamins, potassium, selenium
- 2) **Eggs:** High in B vitamins (may be low in early sobriety), choline (Especially for brain function), vitamin A, protein, as well as antioxidants (lutein, zeaxanthin)
- 3) **Nuts/nut butters (especially walnuts):** fiber, omega-3, vitamin E, magnesium, zinc.
- 4) **Cruciferous veggies** (broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, brussel sprouts): High in fiber, vitamin K, C, E, folate, glucosinolates (anti-oxidants/anti-inflammatory properties), aid in liver detoxification
- 5) **Fermented Foods (Greek yogurt, kombucha, kefir, sauerkraut):** Probiotics!
- 6) **Turkey:** high levels of tryptophan (precursor for serotonin), lean protein, iron
- 7) **Berries:** antioxidants, fiber, vitamin C
- 8) **Avocado:** Vitamin K, C, E, folate, more potassium than bananas, fiber, healthy fats, antioxidants
- 9) **Beans (lentils, black beans, chickpeas):** hellooo fiber!, B vitamins, regulates blood sugar, potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron
- 10) **Oatmeal or Oat Bran:** tryptophan, manganese, zinc, iron, B vitamins, soluble fiber that can help reduce cholesterol

If you're struggling to optimize your eating habits in recovery, I'm here to help. You can email me at dana@therecoverydietitian.com