

- Health / Nutrition**Food to calm the mind**

Keeping calm in a post pandemic world is proving to be a challenge for many, but a few dietary changes can go a long way

HT City · 4 Feb 2021 · 04 · Disclaimer: The views expressed here are the author's personal.

If constant multi-tasking, sudden meetings, long hours on the computer and the never-ending clutter has raised anxiety levels, you're not alone. But, a little adjustment in your diet can go a long way in looking after your mental health. Here's what to add to your diet:



Probiotics: Probiotics help rebalance gut microbiota and improve the gut brain axis. They aid dopamine and serotonin production in the gut. In fact, serotonin plays a key role in stabilising our mood, and is often referred to as the 'happy hormone'. Almost 95% of serotonin is produced in the gut. Curd, kimchi, kefir, fermented vegetables, homemade pickle make for good additions to your diet.

Coloured fruits and vegetables: Mood-lifting fruits and vegetables in red, yellow, green etc. are high on polyphenols and antioxidants. They have compounds that help fight free radical attacks caused by stress and pollution. They help the body build resilience, boost mood and help in building a strong immune system, which is at the forefront when it comes to dealing with stress.

Vitamin B12: Vitamin B12 is processed in the large colon or intestine. Often, when people complain of motion concerns, constant fatigue even after sleep or rest, or anxious bouts from time to time, there is an issue around B12 absorption. B12 deficiencies can make the body vulnerable to irritability and anxiety. Foods that help counter deficiency are curd, fish, chicken and eggs. Adequate level is above 600 units

Vitamin D3: It plays a vital role in everything from digestion to bone health, reproductive health and balancing hormones. It also plays a major role in sleep cycles, so a little bit of sunlight into the retina in the daytime can help improve quality of sleep at night. Foods rich in vitamin D3 include curd, organic chicken, fish and egg yolks. One can also have vitamin D as a supplement.

Magnesium: Known for improving bone health, it is also recognised for its use in calming the mind and gut. Epsom salt baths, consuming nuts, seeds, green leafy vegetables, soluble fibre like oats or bananas will ensure magnesium intake. Magnesium citrate taken under

doctor's supervision is also great for people with constipation or IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), which also has a connection with anxiety via the functions of the gut brain axis.