Mental Health Matters

The relationship between our diet and our mental health is complex. However, research shows a link between what we eat and how we feel. Eating well can help you feel better. You don't have to make big changes to your diet, but see if you can try some of these tips.

- Eat regularly. This can stop your blood sugar level dropping, which can make you feel tired and bad-tempered.
- Stay hydrated. Even mild dehydration can affect your mood, energy level and ability to concentrate.
- Eat the right balance of fats. Your brain needs healthy fats to keep working well. They're found in things such as olive oil, rapeseed oil, nuts, seeds, oily fish, avocados, milk and eggs. Avoid trans fats – often found in processed or packaged foods – as they can be bad for your mood and your heart health.
- Include more wholegrains, fruits and vegetables in your diet. They contain the vitamins and minerals your brain and body need to stay well.
- Include some protein with every meal. It contains an amino acid that your brain uses to help regulate your mood.
- Look after your gut health. Your gut can reflect how you're feeling: if you're stressed, it can speed up or slow down. Healthy food for your gut includes fruit, vegetables, beans and probiotics.
- Be aware of how caffeine can affect your mood. It can cause sleep problems, especially if you drink it close to bedtime, and some people find it makes them irritable and anxious too. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks and chocolate.