走進觸不到的社區。

封面故事

身軀只有瓷碗般大的牠，胃口卻足以吞掉一整枱的飯菜！牠挺著那大嘴巴想：「為甚麼吃的多，卻沒有比較快樂呢？」於是，牠帶著牠的小伙伴，前往探險搜索飲食與快樂的秘訣… …

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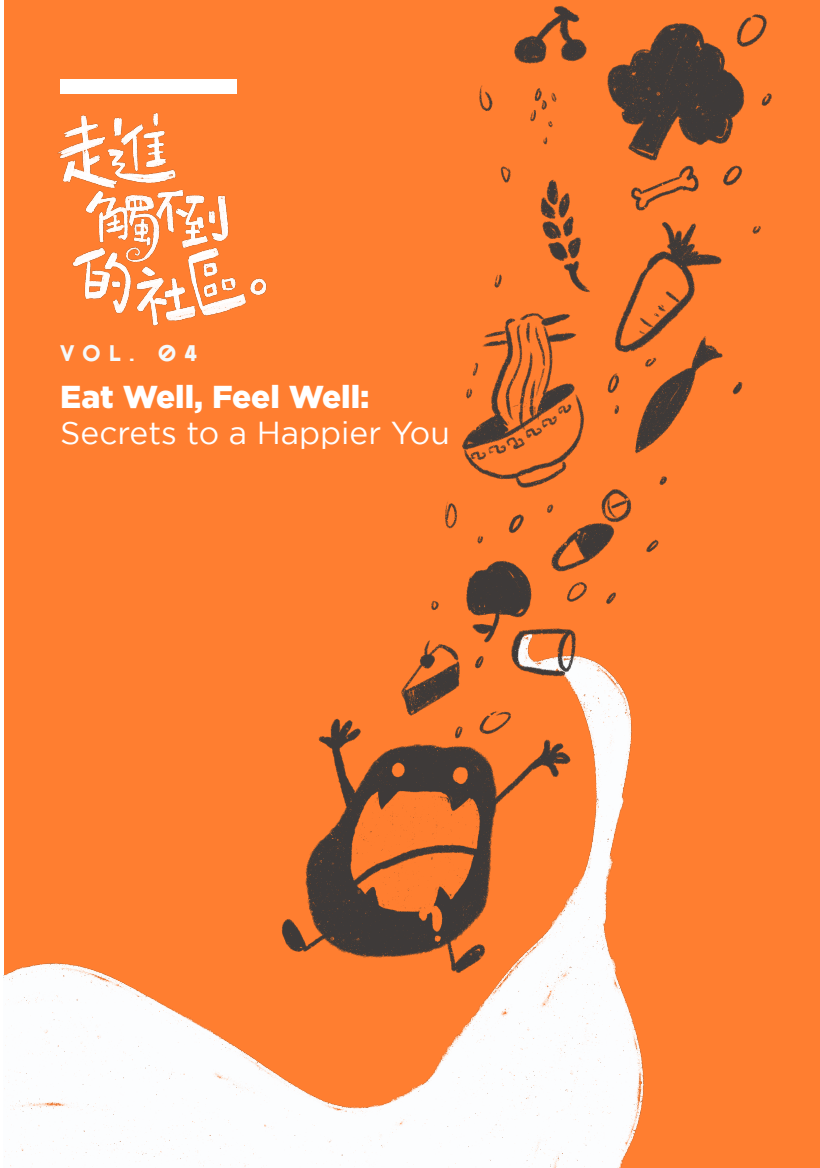
走進觸不到的社區。

VOL. 04

Eat Well, Feel Well:
Secrets to a Happier You

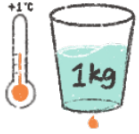


We have covered relaxation in the previous booklet, and this time, we will discuss how our diet affects us. Poor diet does not just affect our physical health, but will also affect our mood.

Let's revisit the secret tips of longevity from the residents of the Blue Zones:

- Having good stress reduction habits
- **Maintaining a balanced diet**
- Avoiding prolonged sitting
- Maintaining close social interactions with family and friends

Calorie balance



The unit of heat is Kilocalorie (kcal), where 1 kcal is the amount of energy needed to raise the temperature of 1 kilogram (kg) (or 1 liter) of water by 1 degree Celsius. The daily calorie requirement varies for each individual and is dependent on factors such as age, gender, nature of work, and level of physical activity.[1]

For an average adult with moderate physical activity, the recommended daily calorie intake is approximately:

1,500 calories F M **2,000 calories**

Each meal should not exceed

450-600 calories;
17-22 grams of fat
(4-5 teaspoons of oil)

The following individuals may have different energy needs or require adjustments:

- Individuals with high levels of physical activity.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- Individuals who are unwell, have chronic illnesses, or are recovering from surgery.
- Individuals who need to manage their weight.

Is your body weight above the standard?

Before discussing how to eat healthily, it may be worth examining whether your body weight exceeds the recommended range.

Body weight largely reflects your physical and mental health. Being overweight or underweight may indicate dietary imbalances and indirectly reflect your mental state. Obesity not only increases the risk of chronic diseases such as hypertension, high blood cholesterol, high blood sugar, heart disease, and cerebrovascular diseases, but also raises the risk of developing depression.

- **Body Mass Index** $= \frac{\text{Weight (KG)}}{\text{Height}^2\text{(M)}}$

*Applicable to Asian adults aged 18 to 65[2]

BMI	Types of Weight
<18.5	Underweight
18.5-22.9	Normal range
23-24.9	Overweight
25-29.9	Obese
>30	Extreme

- Research indicates that waist circumference reflects "Central Obesity", which carries similar risks to overall excess body fat. For the general Asian adult population, if your waist circumference matches or exceeds the following levels, you would be classified as having Central Obesity.[3]

Sex	Waistline
Female	80cm (32 inches) or above
Male	90cm (36 inches) or above

Practicing healthy eating habits

Overweight and obese individuals need to reduce food intake and increase physical activity. To achieve a weight loss rate of approximately 0.5 kg (or 1 pound) per week, it is recommended to consume approximately 500 calories less per day. This, results in a total energy expenditure of about 3,500 calories per week.

**The values listed below are for reference only. If you have any concerns about nutrient intake or any special needs, please consult a nutritionist or relevant healthcare professional.*

How to reduce 500 calories of intake per day?

Breakfast

859 kcal

352 kcal

Lunch

957 kcal

673 kcal

439 kcal

Snacks

522 kcal

217 kcal

328 kcal

100 kcal

30 kcal

100 kcal

Dinner

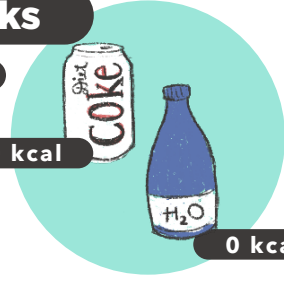
1,300 kcal

500 kcal

Drinks

507 kcal

110 kcal



0 kcal

0 kcal

What to eat if we want to improve our mood?

Research on the Blue Zones suggests that individuals who follow the Mediterranean diet have a 35% lower risk of developing depression compared to those who do not follow the diet. They also have a lower risk of cardiovascular diseases, brain degeneration, diabetes, obesity, and cancer.

Practicing the habit of eating until 80% full, sharing meals, taking rest after meals, and having extended meal times all have positive effects on physical and mental well-being.

Here are some key dietary points derived from the Mediterranean diet that can help improve mood and mental health:

Sufficient intake of Vitamin B Complex and Vitamin D

B-vitamins are crucial for neuronal function and can help prevent and improve depressive moods and brain degeneration.

Whole grains, legumes, green vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish, moderate amounts of dairy products, and small amounts of red meat all contain B-vitamins.

Whole grain cereals, beans, green vegetables and fruits, eggs, fish, suitable amounts of dairy products, and a small amount of red meat etc. all contains vitamin B complex.

Vitamin D helps increase serotonin in the brain, which combats depression. The Recommended intake can be achieved by absorbing 10 minutes of sunlight daily. Vitamin D can also be obtained from sources such as egg yolks and salmon.

Reduce consumption of red meat, fast food, and baked/fried foods

Consuming excessive amounts of fat, sugar, and processed foods can lead to chronic inflammation and obesity throughout the body.

Animal fats and hydrogenated oils contain high levels of saturated fatty acids, which can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases and obesity.

Choose cooking methods like steaming, baking, braising, grilling, and broiling instead of frying or using heavy sauces.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, such as EPA/DHA, can protect cardiovascular and brain health, preventing cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.

Deep-sea fish like mackerel, sardines, and salmon; nuts like chia seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, and black walnuts; legumes, berries, and olive oil are all primary food sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Probiotics

There is a connection between gut bacteria and emotions, as research has found that individuals with depression often lack certain bacterial groups in their gut microbiota.

A high-fiber diet (including prebiotics) promotes the growth of beneficial bacteria, improves gut health, strengthens the immune system, and helps enhance mental and brain health.

In addition to low-fat plain yogurt and cheese, foods and beverages like kombucha and apple cider vinegar also contain probiotics.

Use herbs and spices to replace salt for seasoning

Reducing salt intake can lower sodium levels in the body, prevent excess water retention, reduce pressure on blood vessel walls, and relieve feelings of stress and tension.

Herbs, spices, garlic, onions, and other ingredients can not only replace salt but also enhance the taste, aroma, and visual appeal of food.

Zinc, Magnesium and Iron

Zinc helps maintain immune function, iron prevents anemia, and magnesium aids in stress reduction.

Whole grains, chicken, green vegetables, fruits, and nuts are sources of zinc, magnesium, and iron.

Low levels of these minerals in the blood have been associated with an increased risk of depression.

Habits that affect mood negatively

Excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco

Nicotine can stimulate the brain to release dopamine (Dopamine), which may temporarily make one's mood more relaxed and happier. However, in the long run, the brain will shut down its own mechanism of producing dopamine after consistent usage. Smokers then depend on getting nicotine to gain short periods of relaxation, creating a vicious cycle. Quitting smoking helps reduce depression, anxiety and stress, improving mood and quality of life.

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant with mild sedative effects. However, excessive drinking can lead to acute alcohol poisoning. Long-term alcohol abuse can cause addiction, brain function decline, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and disrupt relationships in personal, family, and work settings, potentially leading to depression.

For the sake of health, it's best to gradually reduce alcohol consumption until completely abstaining. If you decide to drink alcohol, consider the risks and do so responsibly:

Men should not exceed 2 alcohol units per day, while women should not exceed 1 alcohol unit.[6]

1 can of beer/ sparkling wine 330ml 1.3 units	1 glass of red wine/white wine/champagne 125ml 1.2 units	1 small glass of spirits 22ml 0.7 units

Irregular eating patterns

Irregular eating patterns can cause fluctuations in blood sugar levels, leading to fatigue, irritability, mood disturbances, and even mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Setting up dietary and nutrition intake targets

SMART Goal Setting

- **S** PECIFIC
- **M** EASURABLE
- **A** CHIEVABLE
- **R** ELEVANT
- **T** IME-SPECIFIC

Example of long-term goals

Goals to improve mental health within a year

Example of short-term goals

Starting from today, I will eat 1 serving of fatty fish every week for a month. I will also eat at least 4 servings of vegetables and 2-3 servings of fruits every day...

Let's set our *SMART* goals together

Long term goals

In _____ months,

I _____ (name) aim to achieve:

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(Dietary target)

Short-term goals

Let's plan a 1 month dietary and nutrition plan, including time, location, content, and companionship.

- Diversify and balance your diet.
- Be mindful of your food choices.
- Consume 2+3 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Reduce intake of added sugars.
- Opt for steaming, baking, braising, grilling, and broiling.
- Choose low-fat options when purchasing food.
- Include two servings of fatty fish per week.
- Ensure sufficient fiber intake.
- Other: _____
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Avoid smoking.
- Moderate alcohol consumption.
- Use herbs as a salt substitute.
- Follow the Mediterranean diet.
- Prefer white meat over red meat in meals.
- Increase intake of probiotic-rich foods.
- Choose healthy dining options.

Diet and mental health are closely related, and poor dietary habits can impact both physical and mental well-being.

Body weight largely reflects overall health, and being overweight or underweight may indicate dietary imbalances and indirectly reflect one's mental state.

Please refer to the above dietary recommendations for improving mood and maintaining brain health.

Setting SMART dietary and nutrition goals and maintaining consistency are crucial.