

Transcript - Let's Talk Food Literacy: Mental Wellness

Lauren Kennedy, Registered Dietitian, appears on screen and places a variety of foods from all food groupings on the counter—vegetables and fruits, whole grains, dairy, and protein foods. As she does this, images of puzzle pieces pop up in sequence with the words 'explore', 'build', and 'connect'.

Hi! I'm Lauren, a Registered Dietitian.

Did you know that the way we eat can affect our mental wellness?

As Lauren speaks we jump to see different food groupings. A variety of foods from all food groupings, including many foods that are grown/produced locally.

Vegetables and fruits: kale, squash, bell peppers, apples, pears, tomatoes, mushrooms, berries, avocado, snap peas, broccoli, beets, carrots

Whole grains: oatmeal, whole grain pasta, quinoa, whole grain crackers, whole grain naan, whole grain bread

Protein Foods: kidney beans, black beans, lentils, hummus, tuna, cheese, eggs, flax seeds, hazelnut, walnuts, pecans, salmon, milk, unsweetened fortified soy beverage

Other: Olive Oil, Water

Food and mental wellness **are** connected, and we keep learning more about how. For example, feeling overwhelmed or unwell, can influence the way we eat, or whether we feel like cooking. Food Insecurity - worrying about having enough money for food - is also connected to mental health.

You might have heard that healthy eating patterns can lower risk of diseases. But they can also promote mental wellness, lower risk of depression, anxiety, dementia and similar conditions. For specific questions about nutrition and mental health, speak to a Registered Dietitian.

Eating for mental wellness is about the big picture. An eating pattern rich in whole grains, fatty fish like salmon and trout, nuts and seeds like flax seed, lower fat dairy products, olive oil, and a variety of vegetables and fruit can provide the body and mind with nutrients they need.

With the kitchen counter full of food in the background, nutrients obtained from food that support mental (and physical) wellness are listed on the screen.

All together, these types of foods can provide healthy unsaturated fats—like omega-3s, minerals, B vitamins, fibre, antioxidant vitamins, which all play a part in mental health and overall health.

Eating to support mental wellness can also involve slowing down to enjoy your meal, and including foods that are part of your culture and traditions. Foods chosen may look different for everyone.

Lauren shows us different options that she enjoys. First, she shares a dinner plate with 1/2 whole grain naan, canned salmon, raw carrots and broccoli, tomatoes, and a pear with a glass of water. Next Lauren shares a bowl with chickpeas, beets, spinach, edamame, sliced red peppers, and whole grain couscous with a glass of milk.

For me, I like to pair whole grain naan or bread, with 1/2 can of salmon for protein with veggie sticks, and fruit.

Another go-to for me is canned chickpeas for protein, with other frozen veggies that are left over with some whole grain couscous or pasta or whatever I have on hand. And I might pair that with a glass of milk.

As Lauren speaks, the puzzle piece with the word 'connect' appears.

For me, eating is also about connection, and a sense of belonging - whether it is eating with my house-mate or making a family recipe with my sister over video chat or phone.

Mental Wellness is impacted by many factors: genetics, our social networks of family and friends, incomes, and living situations. We need to take collective action together to improve our systems. For example, working towards policies that improve incomes and address household food insecurity, like a Basic Income.

The phrase 'take action!' appears on screen with images of different foods that support mental wellness in the background. Next, a list of activities to support our mental wellness are listed on screen. These include: get enough sleep, practice mindfulness, connect with others, and physical activities. Then we go back to Lauren who continues to talk about food and mental wellness.

There are also steps we can take every day to improve our mental wellness.

In addition to nourishing ourselves as best as we can, aiming to get regular sleep, doing mindfulness activities, and connecting with others, are all great strategies. Including physical activity like brisk walking, or any enjoyable movement, can also help us feel our best, in body and mind.

There is an image of a table with two people sharing a meal. In the foreground the text 'bottom line' appears.

Nourishing ourselves for mental and overall wellness goes beyond food. Noticing how foods and lifestyle choices make us feel; and taking steps to connect with others and our communities are all part of the journey in feeling well.

Eat well. Live well.

The video ends with an image of a puzzle piece with the words 'Eat well. Live well' on the left-hand side, with food-guide.canada.ca below it. An acknowledgement logo for Food Literacy for Life, foodliteracy.ca, appears on the right-hand side along with 'created by Peterborough Public Health' (logo shown). A visual of the food literacy framework from foodliteracy.ca appears on the left-hand side of the screen, with 'Food Literacy' pictured in the center of a circle. The following colourful puzzle pieces surround it: 'Food Skills, Self-Efficacy and Confidence, Ecological Factors (External), Food Decisions, and Food and Nutrition Knowledge.'
