

DOPAMINE & SEROTONIN

How they affect our eating behavior & moods.

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Dopamine and Serotonin are neurotransmitters that carry messages from one brain cell to another. Dopamine is known for being the “awakening chemical” responsible for desire, drive, motivation, and search. Serotonin is known for “assignment complete” related to calming, satisfied, positive feelings.

Have you ever wondered why you go through those emotional high’s and lows along with such incredible cravings for certain foods and you can’t seem to get satisfied, you will eat yourself out of house & home, especially if it’s junk. When our dopamine levels are high we tend to binge on food etc., once we eat our serotonin levels rise then drop again. It’s like a rollercoaster ride! You may observe your mood to change from Mr. /Ms. Jeckyl and Mr. /Ms. Hyde.

Hormones play a big role in all this as well. During premenstrual cycle (PMS) your dopamine levels rise and serotonin levels drop leaving you craving all kinds of foods. Then you find yourself overeating.

In order to keep your dopamine and serotonin levels in balance & in cruise control, you need to try to eat every 3 hours at least 4-5 times a day. This does not mean 4-5 large meals.

Eating this way will keep you from getting hungry and will also keep you from getting low blood sugar (hypoglycemic). Common symptoms of hypoglycemia are; weakness, sweating, shaky hands & legs, fast heart rate, lightheaded, blurred vision, & confusion. Be careful in choosing the right foods to eat. Choose low fat meats for proteins. Salmon fish is high in good fats and is a great source of protein. Don’t forget your good carbohydrates such as colorful fruits and vegetables. Try to stay away from white colored foods such as tortillas, white bread, sugar, etc.

Exercise is a great way to increase serotonin levels. That’s why you always hear healthcare professionals recommending exercise and eating 5 small meals a day. ■

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