



THE ANXIETY-BUSTING DIET

4 Here's something we bet you didn't know: 90 per cent of the body's serotonin or 'happy chemical' is made in the digestive tract. So it follows that avoiding junk food may protect against depression. 'When we eat sugary, starchy foods, we are creating inflammation on a cellular level,' says Chris Caires, chief scientist at Perricone MD. 'Pro-inflammatory molecules can be transported to the brain and gut, affecting the neurotransmitters responsible for mood and mental health.' An anti-inflammatory diet, or one that emphasises antioxidant-rich foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, and maintains normal blood-sugar levels, is key. Caires advocates eating plenty of high-quality protein (such as shellfish, poultry and grass-fed meat), low-glycemic carbohydrates, including oatmeal, and omega-3 fats from cold-water fish (wild Alaskan salmon, halibut, sardines, herring and anchovies), which a study by Gettysburg College in the US found reduced cortisol levels – a sworn enemy of serotonin.

5 SCENTS OF SERENITY

Take a deep breath. Relax. Studies have found that aromatherapy has the potential to reduce anxiety both physically and emotionally. 'Smelling linalool, the compound that gives lavender its sweet floral scent, increases alpha brain waves, encouraging you to relax,' says Professor Tim Jacob, neurologist from the School of Biosciences at Cardiff University. Try Aveda Lavender Essential Oil + Base, £18.50. Meanwhile, sandalwood, a deeply spiritual scent often used to set the scene for meditation, increases alpha brain waves. Tisserand Sandalwood Ethically Harvested Pure Essential Oil, £23, is an industry favourite. To address hypertension, look to ylang-ylang. Korean research shows its aroma reduces high blood pressure due to a sedative effect. Hit Neal's Yard Remedies for Ylang Ylang Organic Essential Oil, £11. ►

