

## *Happiness Food*

### *From Brain Food to Mood Food*

In our modern society, with its high demand for do-ability and functionality, we are experiencing a boom of diets that propagate brain food, and more recently, mood food, too – i.e. nourishment for the brain and food for a good mood. Unfortunately, achieving this is not so easy because, even though nuts are good and healthy for our brains, we can scarcely feel their effect – at least not immediately. This is even more so the case with nourishment for boosting mood (so-called “mood food”), and as a result, most people do not think of food in this context, but instead immediately turn to designer drugs. The focus of their interest and what they are seeking is actually serotonin. This special neurotransmitter apparently acts like a soft, protective film around our cerebrum and prevents the dominance of intellectual processes as well as the conflict caused by a multitude of diverging feelings. As though in a bubble, you feel pleasantly shielded from the hectic pace and turmoil of the outside world – and above all, from that of your own inner world of thought. Peaceful moods emerge that are driven by emotional and sentimental processes. Under the influence of serotonin, you experience subjectively the tendency of the heart (chakra) to open up; you look at the world with loving and mild eyes and experience it from the heart. Depending on the strength of the effect, this can even lead to overwhelming trance-like ecstatic experiences.

### *The Serotonin-Story*

The success stories associated with the newest generation of anti-depressants – the serotonin-reuptake-inhibitors – have less to do with psychiatry than with the widespread desire, particularly in the western world, for substances that are able to improve our moods. In the meantime, these drugs have become prevalent, not only in the treatment of depression, but have also attracted attention far beyond that. More than 50 million US-Americans take them regularly in the form of Prozac (in the German-speaking countries in the form of drugs such as Fluktine or Cipralex).

Those taking these pills on a regular basis do not want to miss out on experiencing life under the influence of the “feel-good hormone” serotonin. In this respect, they are similar to people who after two bars of chocolate still have not had enough, to those who eat a whole bunch of bananas in one go or to those who cannot seem to find an endpoint when nibbling nuts.

Subconsciously, all of these groups actually searching for serotonin – as is also the case, by the way, for the techno-kids and ravers who take MDMA or Ecstasy – an amphetamine that causes the body to release all of its available serotonin at once, thus creating a heart-opening high of ecstasy (hence the name). This substance and the associated attitude towards life that it produces essentially explain the phenomenon of the Love Parade – an event where one and a half million young people get together to the sound of techno-music for a uniquely peaceful demonstration of an attitude towards life that is strongly characterized by love and ecstasy.

When the mothers of the TV series “Desperate Housewives” nibble at the Ritalin of their hyperactive children, they also do it for the purpose of lifting their moods. Ritalin, like MDMA, is an amphetamine that only has a sedative effect before puberty – afterwards, it is quite stimulating and mood-lifting.

### *Serotonin and Basic Pharmacy?*

As nearly all people are in search of the enchanting feeling of happiness, it seems worthwhile finding out how to achieve this feeling without having to resort to medication and drugs or even sweets. In fact, from a medical point of view, sweets are actually the more serious

problem as they cause Type-II diabetes and obesity, whereas the serotonin-reuptake-inhibitors have shown surprisingly few long-term side-effects. In a similar vein, hyperactive boys who have taken Ritalin three times a day for a long time show considerably fewer side-effects than one would expect from a regular intake of amphetamines. Ritalin, however, is largely similar to Ecstasy, which is why today's kids often substitute it with Ritalin. The little hyperactive kids trade it with the bigger kids, who then use it at their parties.

At this point, it seems appropriate to investigate the secret of serotonin. The body produces serotonin from the amino-acid L-tryptophan, which is in fact available in medicinal form. As I discovered for myself, however, its intake does not lead to any convincing effects. The same is true for 5-HTP, a synthesizable precursor of serotonin that is taken every day by millions of people in the US to help them in getting to sleep. This, in turn, is connected with the fact that serotonin is used by our body to produce melatonin – the hormone of the night – which in sufficient quantities enhances the quality of our sleep remarkably.

#### *Where Can We Get it From?*

At first glance, it might seem plausible that, because L-tryptophan is an amino-acid, it would simply be sufficient if we ate enough meat. This, however, only makes you feel heavy and weighed down, but certainly not happy, as many people unfortunately find out the hard way. In addition, as I have described in the chapter about meat, a fear component also comes into play in this respect.

In contrast, people who eat a vegetarian diet with a lot of raw food and who tolerate it well have better experiences, especially if the food is eaten on an empty stomach. Nevertheless, as we have also seen already, this is not appropriate for everyone because raw food is not exactly easily digestible for the “cool types” as classified by TCM.

In our quest for a healthy source of serotonin, we have found a simple and therefore especially convincing solution. Nowadays, I prefer a mix of raw vegetarian food that manages to boost my mood in a healthy way and is surprisingly easy to digest despite being raw food. We are talking about a recipe that is also hunger quenching and that could solve many of our current problems. The secret of this finely-ground raw food is simple. The mix is now available in an inexpensive version that has been developed further in line with my ideas. On the one hand, its effect lies in the high quantity of the quasi-cereals quinoa and amaranth, which are not so common in our parts of the world. If they are stoneground – as is the case with my favourite product “Take Me” – they do not heat up during the grinding process. If the mix is then properly packaged, heat-treated flakes and pops can be omitted and the mix can keep its entire raw food essence, despite having been finely ground. If an appropriate portion of fruit is added, the mix not only stimulates the production of insulin, but also tastes really good as a whole. The result is an astonishingly effective and healthy form of food that on top of all that, is nevertheless still inexpensive.

As this solution has improved my life remarkably, as well as the life of many people I know, I will briefly explain the mechanism behind it. Nevertheless, it is, of course, not necessary to understand the mechanism in order to profit from its beneficial effects.

Although this raw food can boost your mood to feelings of happiness, it is not a medication, nor is it a dietary supplement in the usual sense - it is simply food. It consists only of raw, dried and finely-ground parts of plants and basically has an alkaline effect in the body. Given our modern tendency towards hyperacidity, it is extremely sensible and healthy to start the

day with an alkaline drink. For years, I have been successfully recommending this in my seminars.

### *The Raw Food Trick*

If in the morning on an empty stomach, you take one single tablespoonful of it, either by eating it or dissolving it in water or juice, you will get far more favourable results, provided you do not eat anything afterwards for half an hour and drink plenty of water or tea – preferably herbal tea. The finely-ground, purely-vegetarian fibres, which in this more advanced formula also dissolve easily, combine with the liquid to form a watery mix that, in our experience, passes through the stomach more or less unhampered via the gastric canal. In contrast to solid food, it does not linger in the stomach and does not trigger the production of gastric acid. In this way, the solution lands straight – and above all, still intact – in the alkaline environment of the small intestines; here, it is then able to distribute itself along the surface of the mucous membrane of the small intestines, which has an enormous expanse due to its wrinkled surface. For this reason, we can assume that it is metabolized quickly as a result of the large surface area. The ingredients, and particularly the critical L-tryptophan, thus end up in the blood very quickly. Because the stomach has been empty during the night-time hours prior to the intake, there are hardly any other energy carriers in the blood.

In addition to the amino acids from the abovementioned amaranth and quinoa plants, which are rich in amino acids, the mix also contains carbohydrates from the sweet fruits tangerine and apple.

### *Insulin as the Conveyor*

These carbohydrates elicit the transport hormone insulin, which not only carries glucose into the cells, but also any amino acids that have newly entered the bloodstream, thereby delivering them to the cellular power plants of the mitochondria for the always energy-hungry skeletal muscles. In this way, all available amino acids are used for energy production – with the exception of the amino acid L-tryptophan, which does not fit into the receptor pattern of the skeletal muscles. The reason for this lies in the spatial configuration of L-tryptophan due to its attachment to albumin.

### *L-Tryptophan, the Basis of Serotonin*

At the end of this process, sufficient amounts of L-tryptophan, the main component for the synthesis of the key neurotransmitter serotonin in the brain stem, are now available. Other complex amino acids, such as valine, leucine, isoleucine, tyrosine and phenylalanine, which use the same routes to get through the blood-brain barrier into the brain, respectively into the “brain liquid” surrounding it – the cerebrospinal fluid – usually compete with the L-tryptophan for the limited transport channels. As the competition from other amino acids has been eliminated in the way described above, the L-tryptophan can easily penetrate into the cerebrospinal fluid and is then available for the production of serotonin. In accordance with its own program and needs, the body now synthesizes serotonin in the brain in sufficient amounts to fulfil its many tasks. As the half-life period of serotonin is 20 hours, an intake of the raw food mix once a day ensures a sufficient supply of cerebral serotonin throughout the day. The upshot of all of this is that no one has to turn into a purely raw food vegetarian, although it might be worthwhile for other reasons. In addition, this mix is very wholesome and generally also easily tolerated by the “cooler types” as classified by TCM. A look back to the origins of humankind shows us the significance of this natural way of generating the vital neurotransmitter serotonin.

### *The Old, Natural Way*

The old, natural way, which is properly adapted to the natural environment, was probably used by our ancestors over the course of evolution for millions of years. Being predominantly plant eaters, our earliest ancestors – admittedly, mostly due to a lack of alternatives – already ate seeds, leaves, tubers, roots and fruits as well, and naturally all of these were eaten in the mornings on an empty stomach and always in a hungry state after having been chewed thoroughly with the molars. Of course our ancestors also had to produce enough saliva accordingly. The great apes – according to the observations by the researcher Jane Goodall – still behave this way today and ingest 99% vegetarian food and only 1% animal food.

Nature could rely on these processes in the development of our digestive system and in the control of our digestion via the central nervous system. There was no alternative to this raw food nutrition. In addition, the early humans had to move a lot when trying to obtain food, so the skeleton muscles, being constantly under strain, greedily took all the available amino acids with the exception of the abovementioned L-tryptophan. In this way, L-tryptophan remained without competition at the blood-brain barrier.

Had all of this not been the case, the metabolic pathway would not have developed in such a way that the equally vital sleep and control hormone of the night – melatonin – is produced from the cerebral serotonin, which is needed day and night.

#### *Autumn-Winter-Depression*

This metabolic pathway is also the reason, by the way, why our mood nowadays so often drops in autumn and winter, as we now live completely differently. In the darker seasons, with their longer nights and thus the production of correspondingly greater amounts of melatonin, more serotonin is used, which is then lacking in other areas. In the future, seasonal depression could easily be avoided by enjoying the “Take Me” raw food mix.

Our changed life circumstances have, over time, messed up a great deal. With the control of fire, we began to prepare our food mostly by cooking or frying with heat and we left behind – without noticing it – the old process of synthesizing cerebral serotonin reliably through our own bodies by eating plants on an empty stomach.

Only recently have research results shown us the essential influence of serotonin on our metabolic processes, with considerations such as those mentioned above finally taking us back to what had been known and proven for a long time.

#### *The Loss of the Healthy Way*

In my own case, the first hints for this came from my experiences when hiking in the mountains. Generally, I started early in the mornings on an empty stomach and along the way only chewed a little bit of raw food in the form of fruit, such as bananas and vegetables. Nowadays, I rely on “Take Me” – a mix that fulfils my requirements for healthy and largely pure natural raw food, firstly because heating is avoided through the use of stone grinding, and secondly because heat-treated fillers for stabilisation are left out. Even the cheaper standard version is of largely organic quality, but the mix is also available in 100% organic quality. The mix tastes so good that I take it only with water, early in the morning on an empty stomach.

Since the earliest times when the magic of appropriate raw food on an empty stomach started to be forgotten, very many people must have struggled with a lack of cerebral serotonin. Possibly a lot of people paid the price for this constant deficit with corresponding consequences ranging all the way up to different forms of depression. Although the decisive

criteria for depression originate in the mental and psychological sphere, as I have described in my book (“Depression – Wege aus der dunklen Nacht der Seele”[Depression – Ways out of the Dark Night of the Soul]), we should not overlook the fact that – according to scientific studies – 75% of depressed people respond positively to serotonin-reuptake-inhibitors and can lessen the effects of or even overcome their depression.

#### *Another Way to Boost Mood - Exercise*

The description given above also allows us to conclude how helpful plenty of exercise in fresh air is to promote the supply of serotonin. In this day and age, however, only very few people get enough of this kind of exercise that takes place in a state of “oxygen balance”. Eating ample amounts of chocolate, bananas and nuts, which contain quite a bit of L-tryptophan, can also help a little. Nevertheless, this only leads to a relatively slight increase in the level of cerebral serotonin and the long term side-effects of sweets, such as chocolate should not be overlooked.

#### *The Trick with Sweets*

Based on these facts, it should be easy to come to a conclusive explanation for the chocolate/banana effect, which is a lot weaker, but for some, still noticeable. By eating sweets, so much L-tryptophan gets into the bloodstream that, despite the competition from other amino acids, some of it can always penetrate the blood-brain barrier and thereby unfold its enchanting effect. By exercising at the same time, this effect can be boosted even further.

#### *How to Cope with Stress*

The breakdown of serotonin seems to product different reactions in different people. We know today that cerebral serotonin is used up much more quickly under conditions of stress and strain. In keeping with this, people who have learned mental techniques to avoid stress or to cope well with it, suffer much less from a lack of serotonin. Healing meditations, for instance, are helpful in this regard, and I have published many meditations of this type, such as “Vom Stress zur Lebensfreude [From Stress to Joy for Life]”, “Ärger und Wut [Anger and Rage]”, “Depression – Wege aus der dunklen Nacht der Seele” [Depression – Ways out of the Dark Night of the Soul] and “Selbstliebe” [Self-Love]. As helpful as these techniques are, however, they are a far more efficient when the corresponding physical living conditions are right as well.

Aside from different levels of resistance to stress due to lifestyle and attitude, researchers have also found different receptor genes for serotonin in different people.

#### *Individual Stress Resistance – Vital Substances*

To put it simply, people who have shortened molecules of these genes are worse off when it comes to the production and breakdown of the neuro-hormone serotonin. Presumably, people who are, by nature, equipped with weaker receptors are more likely to suffer from psychological disorders, ranging all the way up to depression. With such a simple, raw-food diet as “Take Me”, we can counteract this and start a simple and healthy therapy. In addition to facilitating the body’s own production of cerebral serotonin, there are further positive health aspects. Because of its alkaline ingredients and dietary fibres, “Take Me”, as part of a balanced diet, addresses various digestive problems and eating disorders, as well as gout, and diabetes. The overall improved supply of vital substances can in fact have positive effects on the whole body, particularly on the immune system, and especially on the skin, though in the latter case, we do not yet understand the underlying mechanisms. In my view, the “Take Me” diet could also help, e.g. with eczema, acne and allergies – and we have often seen examples of this. Even people with dietary intolerances seem to tolerate this type of raw food well,

because it is free of gluten and lactose. I have even heard of positive reactions with respect to fear-related conditions and migraine.

### *More Positive Effects*

In any case, every person would certainly benefit, with a view to improving their quality of life, from having an optimal supply of serotonin in their brains. This concerns in particular the optimal functioning of important mental and physical areas, e.g. the ability to cope with stress, the control of sleeping and waking patterns, the regulation of temperature and pain, as well as impulse control and the ability to memorize and learn. These serotonin-related effects can be noticed immediately after boosting the serotonin level, with the improvement of mood becoming clearly noticeable after a few days or weeks.

### *Personal Experiences*

My own experience has been that only about a quarter of the people who try this system are not able to experience these effects within a reasonable amount of time, and we do not know for sure why this is the case. Possibly their serotonin consumption is so high that the increased supply is still not sufficient.

As for myself, I have been eating different variations of this raw food diet for years and am particularly pleased with this latest version, which finally tastes so good that I prefer drinking it without juice, and simply taking it with water instead. In addition, I feel good about having such an efficient way to boost my mood that is nevertheless so simple and elegant. Thanks to this spoonful of raw food on an empty stomach, I have a stable and positive baseline mood. I have also reached the point that I am now pleasantly certain that this general feeling of well-being and good mood is the normal state of mind of a person who always gets the right nutrition. After about one year, I also had the personal experience that age-related growths on my skin started to recede—namely in the reverse sequence of their appearance.

In order to scientifically assess the positive effects of an increased cerebral serotonin level, it suffices to acknowledge what endocrinological research considers to be the task of the neuro-hormone serotonin. Some of these effects are actually quite striking.

### *Improved Midday Naps*

People who take a midday nap for more than half an hour often do not really feel fit and wide awake afterwards. Sleep research explains this in terms of the influence of the sleep hormone melatonin, which is produced in increasing amounts after half an hour of sleep. For this reason, I recommended in my book “Schlaf – die bessere Hälfte des Lebens” [Sleep – the Better Half of Life] to take a midday nap for a little less than half an hour. New experiences with the raw food diet, however, have shown that this can easily be changed.

Even after longer midday sleeping periods, people are wide awake and full of energy when they get up. The reason seems to be an ample supply of serotonin, even though more of the sleep hormone melatonin is synthesised from serotonin during sleep. Seemingly, there is simply enough available and thus shortage is not an issue anymore.

The central key role of serotonin can be explained as soon as one realises how, via its receptors in all areas of the brain, it influences and controls other neuro-hormones as well – e.g. the “memory hormone” acetylcholine, the other “happiness hormone” dopamine, the sexual hormones oestrogen and testosterone and the “love-“ or “bonding- hormone” oxytocin.

### *More Awake and Alive and Less Hungry*

A further important effect that I have noticed in myself is increased alertness, concentration, and mental as well as physical ability to withstand stress. In this case, the term “brain food” can be used in the literal and truest sense of the word. As this form of diet also reduces hunger (but of course not your appetite or the pleasure of eating) and keeps you feeling sated for a long time, your everyday life can be structured in new and better ways. People with weight problems can derive a great advantage from this – they can lose weight more easily, while being in a better mood and feeling less hungry. Somehow bouncing from one meal to the next is not a problem anymore.

Since the half-life of serotonin is 20 hours, for most people – like myself – one tablespoon, or the full measuring spoon in the “Take Me”- package is enough. Since women generally tend to have lower levels of serotonin, however, taking a second dose on an empty stomach – say, half an hour before going to sleep – is also worth considering.

#### *Free of Side Effects*

In this way, the daily search for nutritious food has now become easier. As the substance of this nourishment includes nothing other than a special mix of vegetarian nutrition, there are no side effects, in contrast to most medications. At most, the digestive problems that we know from raw food diets are possible, but only in rare cases.

With this solution, we come close to the stipulation of the father of modern medicine, Hippocrates, who said: “Your food should be your medicine, your medicine your food”.

Even though I generally have a critical attitude towards most so-called dietary supplements, this form of smart nourishment, combined with the smart form of intake at the right time, has become a very welcome help for myself and those around me.

Of course, it would be desirable to make further progress in this direction and to create, for example, food that satisfies other health needs that are linked with our modern lifestyle in such an elegant and easy way. Together with the relevant experts, I will stay on the ball and promise, dear readers, to keep you informed via my newsletters, which are available free of charge.