

Mood Ground Rules



6 Rules To Eat Your
Way To A Better Mood

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Introduction

Welcome to The Mood Ground Rules

Hey, there!

After 8 years living with Ulcerative Colitis and overcoming the worst anxiety and depression of my life, I made these 6 simple changes that ultimately led to zero UC symptoms and a stable (happy!) mood. They helped me and I believe they can help anyone!

Before we begin, I want to preface a few things. One, this is not an overnight process. It takes time for us to build new habits and lifestyles. That can be a huge challenge and can be incredibly overwhelming. Plus, sometimes our bodies require time to adjust to changes and correct itself. It takes courage and patience. But you can do hard things!

Two, you do not have to be perfect. You are allowed to cheat every once in a while. We are all human and life is hard. But the changes will come if you are dedicated and have a crystal clear purpose to keep you motivated. You will start to feel a difference and it will be incredibly rewarding.

Three, the first three rules are the most important, outlining what you should avoid in your diet. The last three are what to add to support your emotional health.

Four, I believe these are the most impactful rules but they are not all-encompassing. Sleep, movement and stress are extremely important foundations to take get right with respect to balancing our moods.

Alright, enough preface, here are the rules!

Rule 1

Processed Foods Are Not Food

Shop the edges of the grocery store

Everything on the edges in the store is fresh: meat, fruits, vegetables, eggs, dairy. But all the aisles in the middle are packaged foods with a curiously long shelf-life. These are the foods you want to avoid, or at least keep at an exceptionally low percentage of your diet.

When you do purchase a processed item, be ruthlessly skeptical of who has prepared it and if it will harm your body in any way. Heavily processed foods have undergone rigorous and damaging processes to the point where the ingredients have lost most, if not all, nutritional value. This includes processed meats. Processed foods could claim to be healthy but the ingredients used to produce the product could be harmful.

Read the ingredients on every label

The goal is to bring awareness to every single thing you are putting into your body. Everything has an impact, good or bad. If you do not recognize an ingredient on a package, if you cannot pronounce it, if it looks like it's in a different language, if it looks like it was made up by your child, avoid it. You also want to avoid anything containing any type of vegetable oil or MSG.

When you run into questionable ingredients, ask yourself, "is this something I would give to someone I love?" If you wouldn't give it to someone you love, why would you put it in your own body?

Beware of marketing ploys

Beware of marketing that claims a processed product is "vegan," "gluten-free," "high-fiber," "sugar-free," "low-fat," etc. If it's processed, it very well may qualify for those labels technically, but they also likely have little nutritional value and will have ingredients that you should question. Not only do processed foods lack nutrients, they can be filled with ingredients designed to keep you from feeling full. The manufacturers want you to keep eating and therefore, keep buying.



Rule 2

Do Not Consume Vegetable Oils (or Flaming Tornadoes)

Toxic oils are inflammatory

Common household vegetable oils are marketed as cheap and healthy cooking staples. However, the polyunsaturated fats in these oils are chemically damaged by the intense heat and pressure used during the manufacturing process. Not only do they have zero nutritional value, they are toxic to the body by the time they hit store shelves.

Because they are unstable, when consumed, they wreak havoc on the body's cells by destroying cell membranes and releasing damaging free radicals. You can think of free radicals as a flaming, electrically charged tornado that destroys the integrity of your cells.

All of this chaos ultimately builds and ends up manifesting as inflammation which can lead to a whole host of system dysfunctions including irritable bowel diseases, other autoimmune disorders and mood dysfunction.

Stay far away from fried foods

Fried foods are one of the biggest dangers. These foods are usually

cooked in unstable oils at extremely high heat that damage nutrients and transfer toxins to the food and ultimately to your body.

What oils should you use?

The best oils, the ones you want to enjoy and nourish your body with are fresh, aromatic and unrefined. You do still want to be cognizant of any oil's smoke point because if you're cooking with too high of a heat, the oil can get to a point where it begins releasing toxins in your food. When in doubt, if cooking with higher heat (I use 400 degrees or more as a rule of thumb), it's best to stick with either avocado oil or coconut oil.

Here's a cheat sheet:

Unsafe & Unstable	Safe & Healthy
Canola	Olive
Corn	Coconut
Soy	Avocado
Cottonseed	Cocoa Butter
Sunflower	Macademia Nut
Safflower	Sesame
Grapeseed	Walnut
Rice Bran	Flax Seed
Vegetable	Wheat Germ
Peanut	
Rapeseed	

Rule 3

Sugar Is Everywhere, Steer Clear

Sugar is everywhere and it can be harmful

This one's a tough one - I struggle with it daily - but limiting your sugar intake is a huge factor in improving emotional health.

Sugar, when consumed in excess, can cause blood sugar dysregulation which puts incredible stress on the body. It leads to insulin resistance, diabetes, inflammation, mood swings - an endless list.

This isn't just sweets, it includes refined carbohydrates like bread and pasta that the body processes as glucose (sugar). Glucose is one of the body's favored energy sources, but because our Standard American Diet makes carbohydrates the foundation of our meals, our bodies are processing absurd amounts of it every day.

Why we love it

Biologically, we are programmed to love sugar. In our most primal times, when humans were able to find sugar (which was rare) we consumed as much as possible, which is why we have trouble stopping ourselves now. It was a valuable energy source to escape the threats of the wild.

How our sugar addiction is used against us

Food manufacturers take advantage of the fact that we LOVE and are biologically addicted to it so they have created departments specifically designated to design foods that are irresistible. They found sneaky ways to put it in everything, in some form or fashion.

Refined sugar can be listed as over 50 different names on food labels, like high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, glucose, molasses, and cane juice, to name a few. If you pay attention, you will see it.





Rule 4

Fats Are Good, Eat More of Them

Fat is arguably the most misunderstood nutrient

It is invaluable to the body and for people to take it out of their diets is pure insanity. We have been misled to believe saturated fat and red meat is the reason for heart disease and diabetes when in reality it's the rise of processed meats, sugar and cheap, toxic oils in the foods we consume regularly.

Healthy fats are not the problem when it comes to weight loss or any other health issues, so eat all you want! Healthy fats can include foods like cold-pressed oils, avocados, nuts, seeds, fatty fish, fats from pasture-raised animals and eggs. Counterintuitively, you will end up eating less because you will feel full faster.

Why fats are important

Fats are building blocks for cell membranes and hormones, they are the best energy source for sustaining long periods of activity, they stabilize blood sugar and mood, they help absorb key nutrients and they make us feel full - and those are only a few important roles.

How fats impact nutrient absorption

Beware of any foods you see with "low-fat," "skim," "fat-free" or any other varied terminology. They are less nutrient-dense. These products have had fat removed and with it, any beneficial fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K). These vitamins are replaced with synthetic versions that the body does not process well.

Even if you're dairy intolerant, it's better to go with a full fat option because it's easier on the body to digest (Shanahan, 2010). But make sure you're getting the non-flavored options because the flavors typically either have added sugar or other additives that will have a negative impact on the body.

Rule 5

Happy Animals, Happy Body

We are what we eat

If the animals you consume lived a life of stress and confinement, those hormones are transferred to your body. A large percentage of animals are inhumanely raised, crowded together, fed unnatural diets and pumped with hormones and chemicals that alter their genetic makeup, making them bigger, unable to move, or able to produce an unnatural amount of eggs or milk.

When we eat these animals or their products, we are also consuming those hormones, chemicals, additives or poor diet the animal was exposed to or consumed.

What to look for

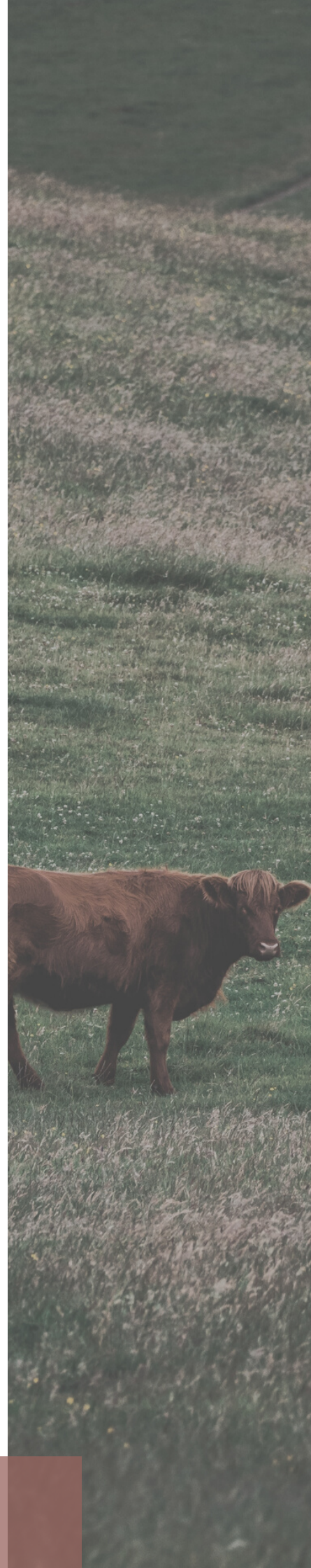
When choosing meats and poultry, aim for 100% grass-fed, pasture raised beef, pasture-raised poultry and wild-caught fish. These options have more favorable fatty acid ratios and higher amounts of vitamins and minerals (Nutritional Therapy Association [NTA], 2020).

Meat Source:

- Organic, 100% grass-fed, grass-finished, pasture-raised beef
- Wild-caught fish & seafood
- Organic, 100% pasture-raised poultry & eggs

Dairy Source:

- Full fat, organic, from 100% grass-fed, grass-finished, pasture-raised cows
- Contain live cultures (yogurt)
- Plain (with zero added sugars)





Rule 6

Macro and Micro Balance Rules All

Each of us has unique needs but we all require a balance of the same nutrients to survive

Macronutrients are proteins, fats and carbohydrates; micronutrients include vitamins and minerals.

Because of our unique bioindividual needs, the amounts will vary so your balance may not look like my balance. You may require a smaller percentage of protein in your diet, or I might require foods higher in certain nutrients, like B vitamins because of my genetics, stress levels or the city I live in.

It is important that we consume a good mix of all of them to find the right balance for our bodies.

Quality matters

Ensure you are getting high quality, nutrient-dense, properly prepared fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, fats, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. It's also important to consume a wide variety of foods and colors to get a good balance of micronutrients as well.

Buy organic whenever possible

Budget and geography permitting, of course. Chemicals of any kind affect the hormone balance in your body.

If your body is busy trying to rid itself of toxic chemicals, it is not able to do its job of balancing your hormones and absorbing nutrients properly.

If your budget is limited, you can reference the links below for the dirty dozen and clean fifteen, a.k.a. the most and least contaminated produce by toxic pesticides and other chemicals.

[Dirty Dozen](#) & [Clean Fifteen](#)

About Me

My health journey began when I was 18 years old and diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis. After 8 years of my first instinct being to locate the nearest bathroom wherever I went, I discovered the power of nutrition. Eating a nutrient-dense, whole food diet changed my life.

I used to read about people who had Ulcerative Colitis and went into remission in disbelief. I thought there was no way you could heal something of which doctors didn't know the cause. I couldn't comprehend that it was even possible not to have constant thoughts of stomach cramps, my proximity to a bathroom, what I ate, when I ate and how long it would be until I'd have to find an excuse to rush home. But believe it or not, it happened. I no longer have any symptoms of Ulcerative Colitis solely because of the changes I made to my eating habits. Pure insanity.

Shortly after I stopped having UC symptoms, the biggest challenge of all came when a change in birth control medication pulled me down a path of anxiety and depression.

On paper, things were great. I had a good job making good money. I had a wonderful and supportive family, good friends, a great boyfriend. And yet it was one of the darkest times in my life. I remember taking walks in the bright sunshine on beautiful Texas days and thinking to myself, "Would anyone miss me if I wasn't here?" I felt a huge hole deep within me. I cried incessantly, desperate for a feeling of safety. I had panic attacks for the first time in my life. I destroyed my relationships because I ruminated on worst-case scenarios, as if inviting them to come to fruition. I felt worthless and my thoughts reinforced that feeling constantly. It was a whirlpool of darkness I could not escape. Then my relationship fell apart. It was the one thing I clung to for dear life because it was the one tiny source of light in my life. My world collapsed but if I'm being honest, I didn't fall much farther to hit rock bottom, I had been already been falling for a long time by that point.

Somewhere within my downward spiral, I went off birth control because I was enlightened of the detrimental effects it can have on the body. Although the effects of my anxiety and

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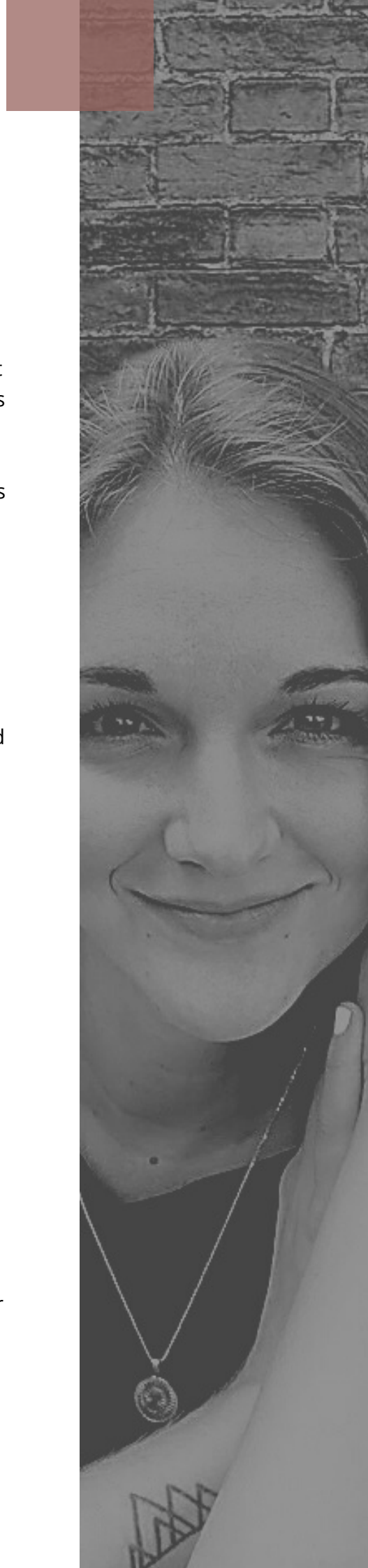
depression came to fruition as the worst heartbreak of my life, the healing my body was undergoing was also taking effect. So, thankfully, even though I was shattered emotionally, I did not feel the tight grip of those dark thoughts that had so often ruminated through my mind. I was lost but I wasn't hopeless anymore. And from there, I rebuilt my life.

My world opened up after that. I learned the true power of everything we put into our bodies - how it makes us feel, how it influences our decisions, how it ultimately unfolds into the lives we lead. Everyone's body is different with different needs based on a number of important factors but all of us require the same basic nutrients to survive - and we get those nutrients from the foods we eat.

I believe we deserve to feel immense excitement and gratitude for our lives. We deserve to feel empowered and inspired to be the best versions of ourselves so that we can design lives we love and are proud to live. We deserve to feel energetic, healthy, happy and strong every single day. I don't want people to waste another minute being miserable or not feeling as good as they could because someone made a half-assed effort and put a band-aid on their problems.

I believe every single human deserves the time and attention we need to support our bodies at a foundational level. I believe every single human deserves to understand how our body works, what it needs, what we are told to put into it and how it will affect us.

My mission is to help you take back your life. I want to empower, inspire and support you in taking steps to design the life of your dreams. I cannot wait to walk alongside you on your health journey and support you every step of the way.





Get In Touch!

I would love to hear from you!

For real.

Share your thoughts, stories, experiences; give me questions and ALL the TMI.

I love talking about health and sharing resources.

So, seriously, do not hesitate to reach out!

Sign up for the newsletter

Find me on the socials



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