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How Nutrition Can Improve The Psychedelic Experience

by **Psychedelic Spotlight**
(https://www.benzinga.com/user/278337)
November 18, 2021 9:48 am

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This article was originally published on **Psychedelic Spotlight** (https://psychedelicspotlight.com/how-nutrition-can-improve-the-psychedelic-experience/) and appears here with permission.

Focus on these five key nutrients to better support your body and increase the likelihood of enjoying your psychedelic experience.

It's widely understood that nutrition is key for a healthy body and mind, but psychonauts, and those undergoing psychedelic-assisted therapy, should also consider how diet affects the psychedelic experience, as well.

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It can be hard to focus on spiritual connectedness and inner healing when you're grappling with racing thoughts and a debilitating stomach ache — just a couple of not-so-welcome side effects one may experience after ingesting psychedelics.

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While set and setting play a significant role in the nature of your psychedelic experience, there are a few things you can do to **offset uncomfortable physical and mental side effects** (<https://psychedelicspotlight.com/how-to-navigate-a-bad-psychedelic-trip/>) people associate with a so-called **“bad trip.”** (<https://psychedelicspotlight.com/bad-psychedelic-trip/>). And nutrition can be one of the best tools for improving your outcomes.

Nutrition and the Psychedelic Experiences

Everything you eat contains varying levels of specific nutrients. Whole, unprocessed or minimally processed fruits and vegetables are chock-full of vitamins and minerals that naturally support your physical well-being and your body's ability to manage stress.

On the other hand, highly processed foods typically contain fewer nutrients and are often more challenging for your body to break down and use. So, if you're eating a diet that's heavily dependent on processed items, you may not be getting enough essential nutrition to support proper digestion and nervous system health.

Psychedelics like psilocybin, peyote, ayahuasca, MDMA, and LSD can deplete your body's nutrient stores — especially if you're working through stress and intense emotions. And, if you're already running low on critical vitamins and minerals, this can make you feel ill during or after your psychedelic experience.

5 Key Nutrients to Improve Psychedelic Therapy

Observing a nutrient-dense diet can help support your body and mind while processing challenging emotions and trauma that may arise during a psychedelic experience. It's also a good idea to avoid anything that could irritate your stomach or trigger anxiety or depression, such as caffeine and alcohol, in the hours before you take psychedelics. Here are key nutrients to focus on and how you can get them:

- **Vitamin D**

You've probably heard of serotonin — the powerful hormone and neurotransmitter that helps stabilize your mood and promotes feelings of happiness and well-being. When your body doesn't produce enough serotonin, you can feel sad, hopeless, angry, anxious, and irritable.

Fortunately, your body can convert the essential amino acid tryptophan (found in several foods, including oats, soy, and eggs) into serotonin in the brain. But it needs a little help — and that's where vitamin D comes in. **Research shows** (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140226110836.htm>) this powerful nutrient activates the gene TPH2 that converts tryptophan into serotonin.

You can boost your vitamin D levels by spending time in the sun, taking a high-quality supplement, or by eating eggs, fatty fish, and mushrooms.

- **Omega-3s**

Your body needs fatty acids for all sorts of crucial processes. But omega-3 fatty acids are especially critical to your mental well-being, energy levels, immune system health, and the very structure of your cells. A diet that's too low in omega-3s can lead to several issues, including fatigue, poor sleep, brain fog, and mood swings.

To ensure you're giving your body the fuel it needs to support your mental health, focus on adding lots of omega-3-rich foods to your diet. Salmon and mackerel are two of the best sources but, if you observe a plant-based diet, you can get plenty of omega-3s by eating seaweed, chia seeds, walnuts, soybeans, hemp seeds, and kidney beans. Increasing your intake of these foods before taking psychedelics can help stave off the poor mood some people experience after a trip and help foster the warm, connected feeling people associate with a good trip.

- **Folate**

Folate is a B-vitamin that plays an essential role in your body's ability to synthesize serotonin, dopamine (the neurotransmitter that helps your body experience pleasure), and epinephrine (or adrenaline). As you can imagine, if your body is underproducing these chemicals, it could negatively impact your psychedelic experience (among other things).

To support your body in synthesizing these neurotransmitters, make sure you're eating your greens — especially broccoli, brussels sprouts, spinach, kale, and collard greens.

You can also get folate from peas, kidney beans, chickpeas, and asparagus.

Your nervous system relies on magnesium to effectively do its job, but **one study shows** (<https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/study-half-of-all-americans-are-magnesium-deficient>) at least half of Americans are deficient in this vital mineral.

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Magnesium deficiency can trigger depression, fatigue, irregular heartbeat, asthma, nausea, loss of appetite, muscle cramps, and more. Luckily, it's pretty easy to get more magnesium into your diet if you have access to whole foods. Dark leafy greens like spinach and kale, nuts, seeds, legumes, whole grains, and avocados are excellent sources. Or you could treat yourself to some dark chocolate (72% cacao or more), which also contains magnesium.

- **Prebiotics and probiotics**

It seems like everywhere you turn, people are talking about gut health — but that's for a good reason. Your digestion plays a crucial role in your overall well-being, including your ability to absorb all the key nutrients we've discussed.

There are two things you can add to your diet to nourish your gut microbiome: prebiotics and probiotics.

Prebiotics are a dietary plant fiber that feeds the “good” gut bacteria, which aid in digestion and help fight off harmful, disease-causing bacteria. Onions, garlic, leeks, lentils, barley, oats, whole wheat, jicama, asparagus, and chicory root are all great prebiotics.

Probiotics are microorganisms you can add to the good bacteria in your gut microbiome. Sources of probiotics include fermented foods like yogurt (dairy and non-dairy), kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, tempeh, kombucha, and miso.

Strive to get plenty of prebiotics and a fair amount of probiotics in your diet to support your gut health — and thus your holistic wellbeing.

Nutrition is only one element of the equation when it comes to how your body reacts to psychedelics. Make sure you're in a safe and comfortable environment and practice taking deep breaths with slow exhales. However, the better you nourish yourself physically and mentally, the more you're likely to benefit from a psychedelic journey.

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