

Turkey – great for the mind, mood and fertility!

By Sue Bedford (MSc Nutritional Therapy)



Turkey is an excellent source of lean protein and is low in saturated fat. All B vitamins are present in turkey meat and these are important for fertility as well as for the mind and mood. Turkey is also an excellent source of selenium, iron, phosphorus and a good source of zinc.

Turkey contains three important antioxidants – N acetylcysteine, Coenzyme Q10 and selenium. Antioxidants are important when it comes to fertility as they help to neutralise the effects of free radicals which may affect the developing egg and sperm. Surrounding the ovarian follicles is a follicular fluid which contains nutrients and hormones. These provide the egg with nourishment before leaving the ovary. If there are too many free radicals surrounding the egg this can cause harm, so it is important to consume plenty of antioxidants. Selenium helps to protect eggs and sperm from free radicals, which may also lead to chromosomal damage. Men with low sperm counts may benefit from getting more selenium in their diets.

Turkey is great for helping to balance out vital hormones too, as it helps to keep post-meal insulin levels balanced out for longer.

There is also a great combination of tryptophan (an amino acid) and B vitamins to be found in turkey. This combination has a balancing effect on blood sugar levels which in turn helps to calm the nerves and prevent hypoglycemia and low moods.

Tryptophan cannot be made by the body but is a natural precursor to serotonin (known as the happy chemical) – an important chemical and neurotransmitter in the body. Serotonin is used to transmit messages between nerve cells, it is thought to be active in constricting smooth muscles, and it contributes to wellbeing and happiness, among other things.

Turkey is also rich in the important nutrient zinc. Zinc is necessary in women for the cells to divide properly and to help keep oestrogen and progesterone levels balanced. In men, zinc is one of the most necessary nutrients for fertility. Zinc is important for healthy sperm and has been found to improve the morphology, motility and chromosomal quality of sperm.

Turkey, avocado and pomegranate salad

Ingredients

- 2 British turkey breasts
- 2 tablespoons miso paste
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 50g of kale
- 1 tbsp of coconut oil
- 30g of toasted flaked almonds
- 1/2 pomegranate
- 1 avocado
- 2 tbsp of freshly chopped mint

Add the honey, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, miso paste, apple cider vinegar and lemon juice to a medium bowl and whisk to combine. Season with a little salt and pepper. Finely chop the kale and place in a large bowl, and drizzle over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the dressing made above and mix. Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a large pan and cook the turkey for a round 5 minutes on both sides. Leave to the side to cool. Slice the avocado and mix with the kale. Remove the pomegranate seeds and sprinkle into the salad. Shred the turkey and mix in with the salad, sprinkle the flaked almonds over the top along with the freshly chopped mint. Enjoy!

Lovely Turkey Soup

Don't waste any turkey this festive period – make some lovely soup and get a nutritious boost for body and mind!

Ingredients (makes 6 servings) use organic ingredients where possible

8 oz carrots

3 sticks of celery sliced

8oz cooked turkey meat

2 medium onions chopped

3 tbsp olive oil

8 oz leeks

1 clove garlic finely chopped

1/4 tsp of thyme (ideally fresh)

1/2 bay leaf

2 litres of turkey stock

3oz long-grain wild rice

Salt and pepper

2tsp tomato puree

How to make:

Place the wild rice into a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes or until soft. Drain and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a pan gently and cook the onion, carrots, leeks and celery for a few minutes until soft. Add the tomato puree and cook for one minute and give a good stir.

Next, add garlic along the stock and herbs, season with salt and pepper and bring to the boil. Then turn the heat down and simmer for around 20 minutes.

Add the drained rice and turkey and simmer for a further 5 minutes. Serve and Enjoy!

Sue is a Nutritional Therapist specialising in fertility, women's health and general wellness. She works closely with IVF Babble, IVF Babble Africa and Emme Menopause Magazine. There are lots of recipes and nutrition articles over on IVF Babble written by Sue in the wellness section- www.ivfbabble.com and also www.emmemenopause.com

Sue is able to offer remote Nutritional Therapy consultations. If you would like more information, do take a look at her website www.suebedfordnutrition.co.uk or send her an email sbnutrition@btinternet.com