

Participant Information Sheet

Food and Mood Survey -

Investigating the determinants of dietary behaviours in young adults with symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or stress in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tēnā koe,

We are a group of researchers from the Nutrition Department and School of Psychological Medicine in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at the University of Auckland. We are interested in investigating the factors that influence eating behaviours for young adults who experience symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or stress.

You are receiving this information to help you decide if you want to take part in our research or not. If you don't want to take part, you don't have to give a reason. Choosing not to take part will not affect you in any way and will not have any impact on your future involvement in research. If you want to take part now, but change your mind, you can pull out of the study at any time.

Please take some time to read the following information to help you decide if you want to take part. It tells you why we are doing the study, what you will need to do if you choose to take part, what the benefits and risks might be, and what happens after the study ends. Before you decide, you may want to talk about the study with other people such as whānau, friends, or your GP/health provider.

Our contact details are listed at the end of this document, and we are available to talk about the study and answer any questions you have.

What is the purpose of this study?

Most of the research looking at the relationship between diet and mental health is focussed on just the food and nutrients, without exploring a wider view of the relationship. There has been limited input in research from people with lived experiences of mental health concerns like depression, anxiety and stress. In this study, we are aiming to broaden understandings of the food-mood relationship through investigating a range of factors that may influence eating behaviours, such as emotions, and the physical and social environment. We hope that this research will inform future co-design

research in the diet and mental health field, and lead to effective and relevant nutrition strategies to support mental wellbeing for young adults in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Who are the researchers?

This study has been designed by a team of researchers, dietitians, and psychologists. This study is part of a Masters of Nutrition & Dietetics research project being undertaken by Georgia Smith, who will be your main point of contact during the study. Dr Nicola Gillies (Dietitian, UoA) is Georgia's supervisor, and the lead researcher of the study. Dr Rajshri Roy (Dietitian, University of Sydney) and Dr Rebecca Slykerman (Psychologist, UoA) are also researchers on this project. As a group, we have experience in conducting research on dietary behaviours, mental health, working with young adults, and survey development. This study is funded through the University of Auckland postgraduate student research fund, and has not received external funding.

Who can take part in the study?

We aiming to recruit 100-200 young adults across Aotearoa New Zealand who experience at least mild symptoms of depression, anxiety, and/or stress, to complete the survey.

You are able to take part in the survey if you meet the following criteria;

- Aged between 18-30 years.
- Live in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Experience at least mild symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or stress.
- Able to provide your own informed consent by completing the survey.

You will complete a screening questionnaire before starting the survey to make sure you meet the criteria stated above.

Please be in contact with the lead researcher (Dr Nicola Gillies) if you are not sure whether you meet these inclusion criteria or not. Nicola's contact details are at the end of this document.

What will taking part in the survey involve?

All study processes will take place online, and can be completed from a smartphone, tablet, or computer connected to the internet.

Screening

If you decide to take part in the survey, you will be asked to complete a screening questionnaire to make sure you meet the inclusion criteria described above. This will

ask you about your age and symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or stress. This should take you around 5-10 minutes.

Consent

If you are eligible to participate, you will be directed to the consent information page. Submitting a completed survey indicates your consent to take part in this study, and you will be asked to confirm that you understand the procedures for consent before starting the survey.

Background Questionnaire

After gaining consent we will ask you to provide some background information about yourself, including gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, and living location (e.g. *region and whether you live urban or rurally*). This helps us to describe the general characteristics of people taking part in this survey, not to identify you as an individual.

‘Food and Mood’ survey

You will then be directed to the ‘Food and Mood’ survey which includes 39 questions, in both open-text and rating scale formats. You will be asked about your knowledge, beliefs, physical and social environment, and motivation around food and eating. You are able to discuss the questions with whānau or friends if you wish. This will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous.

What are the possible benefits or risks from taking part in this survey?

This is an opportunity for you to share your views, experiences and unique perspectives to shape our team’s future research on diet and mental health. We hope that your contribution in this study can inform co-design approaches and lead to effective nutrition strategies, to promote mental health for young adults across Aotearoa, New Zealand in the future. The survey also provides an opportunity for personal reflection on mental health and eating behaviours, as a potential benefit. If you wish, you can receive a full summary of the research once the project is complete. Additionally, to acknowledge and thank you for your time and knowledge shared, upon completion of the survey you can go in the draw to win one of 20 \$50 vouchers.

This study is not expected to cause physical, emotional, social, or spiritual harm to you. We aim to gather as much information related to the factors that influence dietary behaviours. If answering any of these questions causes any discomfort or emotional distress during the study (either related to the study or not), you can find a list of

community-based support services at the end of this document and the survey itself. You can also leave the survey at any point if you find the questions uncomfortable to answer.

What are my rights as a participant if I take part?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary (your choice), and your decision to take part will not affect your relationship with the University of Auckland and opportunity to participate in future research studies in any way. If you are a student of the researchers, we give our assurance that your participation or non-participation in the study will have no effect on your grades or relationship with the University and that you may contact your academic head should you feel that this assurance has not been met.

If you do choose to take part, as a participant you have the right to;

- Leave the survey at any stage to withdraw your participation in the study, without giving reason and with no consequences. If you leave the survey before submitting it your answers will not be used in data analysis. Please note that if you do submit your survey, you will not be able to edit or withdraw your data after this point as the survey is anonymous.
- Ask any questions about the study at any point in time during participation in the study.
- Receive a summary of findings from this research project.
- Refuse to answer any survey question.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

The research team takes confidentiality very seriously. The survey is entirely anonymous. There is no risk that you will be able to be identified by anyone other than the research team. If you choose to receive a summary of the findings, or to go in the draw to win the gift voucher, you will be required to leave your name and email. However, this information is stored in a separate database to your survey response, so there is no chance the two will be linked at any point. Only the student researcher (Georgia Smith) and the lead researcher (Dr Nicola Gillies) will have access to the information you provide.

How will data be stored, retained, and destroyed?

The data and information collected through the questionnaires and surveys will be collected using Qualtrics software for the duration of the study. This is a secure online software, which is recommended by the University of Auckland research hub. Once this is complete, all data will be exported to secure password protected servers at the

University of Auckland. Data will be permanently deleted from the Qualtrics software after data analysis has been finalised.

Only the student and lead researcher will have access to the data during and after the study. According to our ethical approval, all data will be kept for 6 years after the study is complete then deleted or destroyed. The lead investigator (Dr Nicola Gillies) is responsible for safekeeping data. Your data will not be used for any purpose other than what is specified in the information sheet, and individuals outside of the research team will not have access to the data you have provided for this study.

What happens to the results?

The results will be published as part of the student researcher's thesis project. The findings may also be further published in academic journals, or presented at conferences. We may use excerpts from the survey to illustrate our research findings, however there is no chance you can be identified from these. No information that could identify you will be used in any research outputs.

A summary of the research findings can be sent to you on request, which you can select at the end of survey completion. If you choose to do so, your contact information will be stored on a separate database to survey responses, and the two will not be linked at anytime. There may be a delay between the end of the study and you getting the final results.

Who do I contact for more information or if I have concerns?

If you have questions about the study or would like to participate, please contact the research team

Principle investigator

Dr Nicola Gillies, n.gillies@auckland.ac.nz

Student investigator

Georgia Smith, gsmi352@aucklanduni.ac.nz

For concerns of an ethical nature, you can contact the Chair of the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee

ahrec@auckland.ac.nz, or at 373 7599 ext 83711, or at Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, 1142

For Māori cultural support

In the first instance, talk to your whānau. Alternatively, you may contact the administrator for He Kamaka Waioara (Māori Health Team) by phoning 09 486 8624 x 2324



If you wish to talk to someone
who isn't involved with the study

Head of school (school of medical sciences)
Professor Clare Wall, c.wall@auckland.ac.nz

*This research has been approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee
on 30/04/2025 for three years. Reference Number AH29277.*

Contact details for further support

The following websites or help numbers can be helpful you are experiencing poor mental health and need further support. They have skilled people you can contact to help:

- **Need to talk? Free text 1737** if you are feeling stressed, down, or overwhelmed and need someone to talk to. This service is available 24 hours a day, and you will talk to (or text with) a trained counsellor or peer support worker. Website: <https://1737.org.nz/>
- **Youthline Aotearoa Helpline** is staffed by qualified counsellors and trained volunteers who can provide support on a range of different issues, such as psychological and emotional distress, work issues, family problems, and experiences of abuse. The helpline is available 24/7. Freephone: Call 0800 376 633 or Free text to 234. Website: <https://www.youthline.co.nz/>
- **Smallsteps** is an Aotearoa New Zealand created suite of tools that you can pick and choose from depending on your needs. Website: <https://www.smallsteps.org.nz/>
- **Headspace App** is a meditation and mindfulness app to help with stress. Website: www.headspace.com.
- **SPARX** is designed by researchers in Aotearoa | New Zealand. It is created to be used on a mobile phone and a computer. It has been designed with Tamariki/Rangatahi in mind. It uses computer gaming approaches to help. <https://www.sparx.org.nz/for-young-people>
- **Calm website** provides techniques and information to help with managing stress, anxiety, depression and more. Website: www.calm.auckland.ac.nz
- **The Low Down** provides support for rangatahi for hauora, identity, culture, and mental health. Website: <https://www.thelowdown.co.nz>
- **Outline** is a confidential, free, all-ages support-line for people who want to speak to a trained volunteer from the rainbow (LGBTIQ+) community. Freephone: Call 0200 5463 between 6pm-9pm. Website: <https://outline.org.nz/>
- Further information and free support can be found at <https://www.depression.org.nz/> and <https://www.depression.org.nz/>. This includes information for Māori, Pasifika, and LGBTI groups.

If you are experiencing feelings of stress or anxiety that you think you need more help with you should **make an appointment to see your family doctor** and talk about these feelings with them so that they can discuss support options with you. **If you have a medical emergency and require urgent assistance please call 111.**