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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute English

### Food and mood

The logo for BBC Learning English, consisting of the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a dark green background.

*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Dan**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English – the show that brings you an interesting topic, authentic listening practice and six items of incredibly useful vocabulary. I'm Dan...

**Neil**

And I'm Neil. Now, a favourite topic today: food, and how food can influence your mood. Dan, tell me, what food makes you happy?

**Dan**

Oh, you know, ice cream, chocolate... chocolate always puts a smile on my face.

**Neil**

And a few inches round your waistline! Sadly, the research we'll be looking at today doesn't suggest you eat more chocolate... but it does talk about bacteria!

**Dan**

Bacteria – those simple, small organisms – they make me happy?

**Neil**

Absolutely, the so-called 'good' bacteria do! We'll get to that, but first we'll look at today's question. How many bacteria are there in the human body?

- a) 39 million
- b) 39 billion
- c) 39 trillion

**Dan**

They are pretty small. I'm going to go for c) 39 trillion.

**Neil**

Well, we'll find out if you're right... by counting them one by one.

**Dan**

That's going to take longer than six minutes!

**Neil**

Yes it is, so let's get moving! Scientists believe your mental state is connected to the bacteria in your **gut**.

**Dan**

My **gut** - my stomach and the other organs my food passes through...

**Neil**

Yes. Researchers at McMaster University in Canada and University College Cork in Ireland have found that certain bacteria help reduce **anxiety** in mice...

**Dan**

**Anxiety** – the state of being worried or anxious. I don't like the sound of an anxious mouse.

**Neil**

Well I'm afraid there's another mouse experiment coming up. Researchers at Kyushu University found **germ-free** mice showed more stress...

**Dan**

**Germs** – a general word for bacteria and microorganisms, usually the ones which cause disease... So **germs** help reduce stress and anxiety in mice. Any research on humans?

**Neil**

The BBC TV programme Trust me, I'm a Doctor has just explored this. They looked at foods which are high in 'good' bacteria – a claim which more and more food products are making these days.

**Dan**

Yes, it's a phrase that appears a lot in marketing.

**Neil**

But many traditional foods are high in good bacteria as well. They found that homemade **fermented** food was best.

**Dan**

So things like miso soup, kimchi, yoghurt, sauerkraut – all these are **fermented**. Have you tried all of those?

**Neil**

I love miso soup and kimchi. And fermentation is the process where sugars in food are turned into acids and alcohol.

**Dan**

**Fermented foods** are full of lots of good bacteria for your **gut**... Anything else from the BBC programme?

**Neil**

Well, this is the man behind the BBC study, Dr Michael Mosley. In this clip, a radio presenter asks him about the best kind of food to make us happy.

**INSERT**

**Dr Michael Mosley interviewed on BBC Radio 4**

**Presenter**

What's the good mood food? What shall we eat now to cheer ourselves up?

**Dr Michael Mosley**

Mediterranean **diet**. Olive oil; oily fish, full of omega 3, which is really good for the brain; whole grains; lots of fruits and vegetables. Sugar: terrible for you.

**Presenter**

Not chocolate eclairs then?

**Dr Michael Mosley**

Sadly not. That will make you feel good for about 30 seconds until you finish it and then you feel terribly guilty.

**Presenter**

Right, ok. Mediterranean it is.

**Dan**

He said the best kind of food is the Mediterranean **diet**. Now, a **diet** can mean 'an eating plan designed to help you lose weight'.

**Neil**

But that's not what it means here. Here it refers to the food and drink eaten by a group of people – in this case, the people living around the Mediterranean Sea.

**Dan**

Lots of oily fish, olive oil, grains, fruits and vegetables. And of course, add in plenty of **fermented** food too.

**Neil**

And don't eat too many fatty, sugary, chocolaty things like chocolate eclairs – those are buns filled with cream and covered in chocolate. It's really **not rocket science**, is it?

**Dan**

Eating healthily is pretty straightforward, even if the science behind it is complex. When you say something is **not rocket science**, you mean 'it's not difficult to understand'.

**Neil**

Now, are you ready for some counting?

**Dan**

Ah yes, you wanted me to count all the bacteria in my body! I said **39** trillion.

**Neil**

And you were right. The number goes up and down, but on average we're thought to have around **39** trillion bacterial cells in the body, according to the Weizmann Institute in Israel. The interesting thing is they think that there are only **30** trillion human cells in the body.

**Dan**

So there's more bacteria than human in me?

**Neil**

Well, maybe just you, Dan! Now, before the bacteria take over completely, let's look over today's words one more time.

**Dan**

**Gut** was first. It means 'the stomach and other organs which digest our food'. But here's an extra tip - the word can also mean 'bravery' when used in the plural. You've got **guts**, Neil, wearing that crazy shirt in this office!

**Neil**

Why thank you. Maybe I don't feel any **anxiety** about how I look! **Anxiety** was our second word, and it means 'fear or worry'. The adjective is anxious.

**Dan**

You know what makes me anxious? **Germs**. I wash my hands fifty times a day. I can't stand the idea of getting ill from all the **germs** around here.

**Neil**

Yes, **germs** are tiny organisms, and usually refers to those which carry disease. But as we heard, certain **germs** are good for you!

**Dan**

Especially those which are in **fermented** food. That's food which has gone through a process where sugars turn into acids and alcohol. They often taste sour or bitter.

**Neil**

We also talk about **fermenting** alcoholic drinks. Beer and wine are **fermented**.

**Dan**

Does that mean I should make them a part of my **diet**? A **diet** not only means ‘a healthy eating plan’, but can also mean ‘the foods and drinks consumed by an individual or group’. Which country has the best **diet**, Neil?

**Neil**

Well, in my opinion the Japanese **diet**. It’s my favourite anyway – very varied and plenty of **fermented** food!

**Dan**

And finally we had – **it’s not rocket science** – it’s simple to understand. An example?

**Neil**

Brewing beer **isn’t rocket science** – you just need hops, yeast and patience.

**Dan**

And there we are – a rocket speed review of today’s words! And that’s the end of today’s 6 Minute English. Please join us again soon.

**Neil**

And we are on social media too. Make sure to visit us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

**Both**

Bye!