



The Chemical Chorus

Get to know your brain and body chemistry

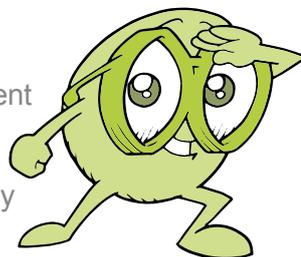
We all have a 'chorus' of body chemicals singing in the background, which influence our mood, behaviour, and feelings.

This quirky bunch of neurotransmitters and hormones have a significant impact on your lifestyle choices every day.

DOPAMINE

Dopamine has many different functions.

In the brain, it is released by nerve cells to help them transmit electrical messages to each other, which is critical for healthy brain and nerve function.



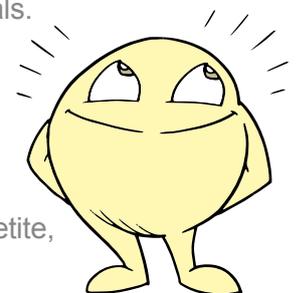
Dopamine plays an important role in determining your behaviour. Often referred to as the 'seeking' chemical, it helps you recognise opportunities for 'reward' such as visiting friends, eating tasty food or achieving a long or short-term goal.

Dopamine also helps you 'move towards' the reward both physically, by controlling movement of the body, and mentally by keeping you focused on achieving your goals.

SEROTONIN

Serotonin is involved in many body functions including regulating your sleep and appetite, and helping with digestion.

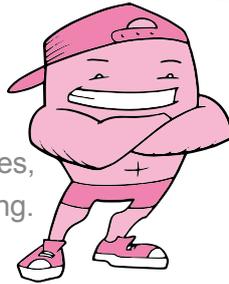
But it is most well known for making you feel happy when you do something you enjoy or achieve your goals.



The CHEMICAL CHORUS

ENDORPHIN

Endorphins make you feel good all over when you do something active like walking, running, palates, singing, physical work or gardening. It also acts as a mild analgesic (pain killer) to reduce the discomfort you feel from working your muscles.



Exercise delivers many health benefits and Endorphins are nature's way of rewarding you for your efforts!

Adrenalin can flood your body instantly, increasing blood flow to the muscles and heart, widening the pupils in the eyes, and providing instant access to short-term energy stores (i.e. glycogen).

Prolonged, low level stress (good and bad) causes Adrenalin, and other stress hormones such as *cortisol*, to drip continuously through your body. Unfortunately, this can damage delicate blood vessels and arteries, and increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

OXYTOCIN

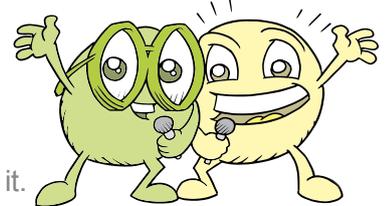
Oxytocin is often called the 'hugging hormone'. It is released when you physically connect with another person (or a pet!), giving both of you a lovely feeling of wellbeing.



Oxytocin is at the core of the *pair bonding* between parent/child, lovers and friends. It also plays a part when you are developing trust in another person.

THE DOPAMINE/SEROTONIN DUET

Dopamine and Serotonin work together to motivate you to repeat a specific behaviour. Dopamine 'seeks' out a desirable action and encourages you to follow through. When the action gets the expected result, Serotonin is released to make you feel good about it.



When the desirable action is **going for a jog**, you put on your runners and head out. The exercise triggers Endorphins, which make you feel good (expected result) and Serotonin is released. Win/win for your body.

When the desirable action is **eating French fries**, Dopamine helps you pull into the drive thru and order. The salt, fat and sugar makes the fries taste delicious (expected result) so Serotonin is released. Win for the fast food outlet/loss for your body.

ADRENALIN

Adrenalin, also known as *epinephrine* (pronounced *epin-efrin*), helps your body mobilise in response to stressors such as physical or mental threat, bright lights, intense exercise, excitement and high temperatures.



Try to be more conscious of the impact your chemical chorus is having on your daily lifestyle choices.

