

Depression

“When we take a close look at the diet of depressed people, an interesting observation is that their nutrition is far from adequate. They make poor food choices and selecting foods that might actually contribute to depression.” - adapted from The National Center for Biotechnology.

Inadequate nutrition consisting of poor food selections among depressed people, is a key indicator that can lead to depression or can worsen the disorder itself.

To prevent depression we can choose healthier food options that contain several of the following nutrients: calcium iron, omega 3's, folate, carbohydrates, and protein. Nutrition plays a role in the prevention of depression by affecting mood status, energy efficiency and improving cognitive function according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

Below is a description of each as well as what foods the item is found in.



Calcium:

Is a nutrient that aids in building or the maintenance of strong bones and teeth as well as preventing the development of osteoporosis, a weakening of the bones. Good sources of calcium can be found in dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt or other calcium fortified cereals.

Iron:

Iron delivers oxygen to blood and prevents anemia. Good sources of iron in red or white meat, beans, and spinach.

Omega 3's:

This essential fatty acid aids in lowering muscle inflammation, improves cognitive function, and also improves heart health. Omega 3's are found fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, and mackerel.

Folate:

Folate is part of a coenzyme that aids in the process of new cell production. With that said, folate prevents neural tube defects such as SpinaBifida during the developmental process of the fetus during pregnancy. Folate is found in cereals, breads, pasta, or rice.

Carbohydrates:

Our bodies process carbohydrates into glucose, the energy source in our bodies. Glucose is important because it provides our bodies with energy to perform daily tasks. Without this energy, we can be tired and unhappy. Good sources of carbohydrates are found in fruits, all grains, and starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, green peas or sweet potatoes.

Protein:

Not only is protein important for muscle growth and repair, it also plays an important role in brain function and mental health status. This nutrient can be found in both plant and animal products such as bean, lentils, grains, peanut butter, nuts, red or white meat, dairy products, and eggs.



While nutrition may be an important role of preventing depression, it is also important to consider the benefits of adequate sleep, daily exercise and sometimes medication. Sufficient amounts of sleep will help you feel better and more re-energized when performing daily tasks. Exercising helps reduce the stress in the brain and can improve mental health while done regularly. Medication might also be a great option to talk about with your health professional. At work, it can be a challenge to be physically active, especially when sitting at a desk for a long period of time. Every hour or so consider taking a brisk walk for about 5-10 minutes so that you can relieve your body from sitting down all day and maintain a healthy and happy lifestyle.