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This article is all about nutrition, and how eating well can positively impact our mental health. Read below to find out how.



And don't forget, our last article was about sleep ... and how to get some more of those precious zzzzz's. [Click here](#) to find out more!

Mental Health and Food ... Does it Really Matter?

**By Amanda Pulford
Director and Clinical Psychologist
(BPsych Hons, MPsych Clin)**

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Did you know that recent evidence suggests that good nutrition is essential for our mental health? And did you also know that evidence indicates that food plays an important contributing role in the development, management and/or prevention of specific mental health problems such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and addiction? Read on to find out more.

If you're interested in our previous articles, please click [here](#)

If you've got a suggestion for an article, or there's something more you would like to hear about, please send us an email by clicking [here](#)

AWAKEN PSYCHOLOGY

Healing Through Growth
118 Partridge Street
Gleneig South SA 5045

e : amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au
w : www.awakenpsychology.com.au
fb : www.facebook.com/awakenpsychology
t : www.tumblr.com/blog/awakenpsychology

p : 0488 954 195
f : 08 8294 3100

In individuals who report no daily mental health problems; fresh fruit, vegetables and salad feature prominently in their meals. And those who report some level of mental health problems eat fewer healthy foods, make less meals from scratch, and eat more unhealthy foods (such as chips, chocolate, ready meals and takeaways). Further, a notable feature of the diets of patients suffering from mental disorders is the severity of deficiency in complex carbohydrates, proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals.

Carbohydrates : Eating a meal which is rich in carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, salads, whole grains) triggers the release of insulin in the body. Insulin helps let blood sugar into cells where it can be used for energy and simultaneously it triggers the entry of tryptophan to brain. Tryptophan in the brain promotes the feeling of well-being.

Proteins : A high quality protein diet (meats, dairy, eggs, beans, peas, whole grains) contains essential amino acids. The neurotransmitter dopamine is made from the amino acid tyrosine and the neurotransmitter serotonin is made from the amino acid tryptophan. A lack of these two amino acids is associated with low mood and aggression.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids : The brain is one of the organs with the highest level of lipids (fats). Experimental studies have revealed that diets lacking omega-3 lead to considerable disturbance in neural function. And research findings point out that an imbalance in the ratio of the omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, and/or a deficiency in omega-3 fatty acids, may be responsible for heightened depressive symptoms.

Vitamins : An improvement in mood has been associated with improved vitamin B2 and B6 levels in individuals. And in women, low vitamin B1 was linked with poor mood. Vitamin B12 has been linked to increases in frontal lobe activity and cognition. And folate plays a critical role

in brain metabolic pathways, in turn affecting depressive symptoms.

Minerals : Minerals such as chromium, iodine, iron, selenium, and zinc all contribute to good mental health. These minerals ensure metabolism of brain cells, help to create neurotransmitters and myelin, give energy to the body, and assist in regulating mood.

Remember, a balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing can be protected by ensuring that our diet provides adequate amounts of complex carbohydrates, essential fats, amino acids, vitamins and minerals, and water.

If you feel like your mental health is being affected by your nutrition, and you'd like some help breaking negative patterns, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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