

Good Food, Good Mood

Kitty Finklea
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Most of us know eating healthily can decrease the risk of heart disease and other medical issues, but did you know research also indicates how you eat can affect depression and anxiety?

Medications and therapy are first-line options for treating mental health, but evidence shows lifestyle changes such as managing stress, adequate sleep, and healthier eating habits can also boost your well-being.

There has been an increased focus on nutrition for the brain, and a new area of study has developed called Nutritional Psychiatry. Interestingly, many of the foods linked with increased or decreased risk for major illnesses are also linked with brain health. For example, excess sugar and refined carbohydrates increase risk of heart disease as well as depression and anxiety. And on the flip side, more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and omega 3 fats decrease risk of heart disease as well as depression and anxiety.

The Standard American Diet, ironically known as SAD, is linked with higher levels of depression and anxiety and consists mainly of processed or "fast foods" along with processed grains, sugar, sweet drinks, and very little plant foods. The diet recommended for improving brain health and helping to decrease depression and anxiety is the Mediterranean Diet. And good news... if you're vegetarian or vegan, and eat mostly whole plant foods, you're already eating for the brain!

The Mediterranean Diet encourages the following:

- **Daily** - fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, olive oil, herbs, and spices – these foods are high in nutrients and fiber for the brain
- **Two or three times a week** - fish and seafood for omega 3 fats which are good for the brain
- **Throughout the week in moderation** – poultry, eggs, and low-fat cheese or yogurt for protein
- **Once or twice a month** – small portions of red meat or sweets if you like these foods

Often people eating a Mediterranean Diet have days each week where they don't eat animal products at all. The bottom line is, eating more plants has been shown to help a variety of illnesses, including depression and anxiety, and this plan



encourages plant foods every day.

The question is: how do you go from a Standard American Diet to a Mediterranean Diet? The best way to make a nutrition change is to start slow and build in more changes over time. The following are suggestions for how to implement this change.

- **Wean off soda, juice, sweet tea or other sweet drinks.** Drink less over time. For example, cut servings in half or only have 1 serving a day at the time you crave it the most.
- **Drink more water.** Invest in a water bottle and aim for half your body weight in ounces of water daily.
- **Increase fruits and vegetables.** Add fruit or veggies to one meal or snack and increase over time to all meals and snacks.
- **Limit red meat.** Try more poultry and seafood, and aim for one meatless meal a week.
- **Prep food ahead.** Use your slow cooker more often, cut up veggies and fruit after shopping, marinate seafood or chicken the night before, cook up a pot of brown rice or quinoa, roast veggies for more than one meal, make salad and put in a gallon plastic bag for the week.
- **Work on one meal or snack at a time.** For example, if starting with breakfast – have peanut butter toast with banana, or oatmeal with fruit, or scrambled eggs with veggies and toast instead of sausage and bacon.
- **Cook with healthy oils.** Sauté in olive oil instead of butter or animal fat.
- **Switch to whole wheat or whole grains.** Bread, crackers, and pasta can be a great start.
- **Add beans to the menu.** Incorporate legumes at least two or three times a week.
- **Experiment with herbs.** Add fresh or dried parsley, oregano, basil, thyme, and other spices to give foods delicious flavors.

When making lifestyles changes, backsliding is normal! If you fall off the plan, don't feel guilt or shame, but find ways to get back on track. It takes about three weeks of healthier eating for most people to notice a change in depression and anxiety. Your brain and the rest of your body will thank you!

May is Mental Health Month



Mental Health America has designated May as Mental Health Month. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), The National Council for Behavioral Health, and the American Psychological Association are participating in activities to increase awareness about the importance of mental health. This year, the theme is "Back to Basics." The goal of this year's theme is to provide foundational knowledge about mental health and mental health conditions, and information about what people can do if their mental health is a cause for concern. Look for these hashtags • #BackToMHBasics • #MentalHealthMonth

- #MHM2022 to stay connected to activities related to Mental Health Month.

Safety Tips

Safety Tips for Summer

As summer quickly approaches, I thought it would be appropriate to send out my annual summer safety tips for hot weather. These tips are important for the young and old alike, but particularly for the young and bulletproof that often don't think about these reminders until they get a little older and start paying the price (like me).



1. Drink plenty of water or hydrating fluids, even if you're not thirsty (not alcohol, which speeds up dehydration).
2. Limit strenuous activity to the morning and evening hours.
3. Avoid sun exposure from 10 am to 4 pm; these are the peak hours of damaging UV rays from the sun.
4. Use sun block lotion with an SPF of 30 or higher, and re-apply every 2-3 hours outdoors.
5. Wear long sleeves and wide brimmed hats when possible.
6. Wear sunglasses that block 99-100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays.

I hope these tips help you avoid many trips to the dermatologist as you get older.

William Poole
Director of Security

Closure Reminder

**HopeHealth will be closed
Monday, May 30, in observance of
Memorial Day.**



Upcoming Seniors with Hope Events



**Seniors with Hope
at Bethea**
June 2, 2-3:30 p.m.

**Seniors with Hope at
the Medical Plaza**
June 9, 2-3:30 p.m.

Seating is limited at the Medical Plaza.
To reserve your seat, call **803-525-4241**
or email didavis@hope-health.org.
Please wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Provider Spotlight



Christine Gordon
MSN/MHA, APRN, FNP-BC, AAHIVS

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

INTENSIVE COURSE IN HIV & AGING

This certificate program provides a unique hands-on learning experience that will improve the ability to care for older adults with HIV, enhance expertise as HIV providers, and foster lifelong learning through a community of like-minded clinicians.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Aronsiri Sangarangkarn, MD, MPH
Temple University, Lewis Katz School of Medicine

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Jonathan Appelbaum, MD, FACP, AAHIVS
Florida State University, College of Medicine

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



Congratulations to Christine Gordon, MSN/MHA, APRN, FNP-BC, AAHIVS, on completing an intensive course on HIV & Aging from the American Academy of HIV Medicine. Gordon is a family nurse practitioner specializing in infectious disease at HopeHealth in Aiken.

Exercise of the Month - Update for May



This month, **Kayla Thompson** highlights the importance of fitting fitness into your weekly routine.

[Check out the full article here!](#)

Kayla Thompson is a diabetes care navigator at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence and is a certified exercise physiologist through the American College of Sports Medicine. She has a Master of Science in clinical exercise science.

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