



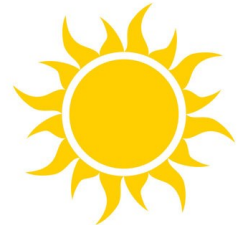
A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

"LET THY FOOD BE THY MEDICINE AND THY MEDICINE BE THY FOOD."

HIPPOCRATES

## Vitamin D: What It Is and Why It is Important For Mental Health!

Vitamin D is a nutrient our bodies need in order to build and maintain healthy bones. That's because the body can only absorb calcium, the primary component of bone, when vitamin D is present. Vitamin D contains anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and neuroprotective properties. It helps regulate several cellular functions in the body, such as supporting immune health, muscle function and brain cell activity. And recent studies have shown that low vitamin D levels are associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety.



Continue reading this month's newsletter for more information on the important connection between Vitamin D and emotional health.

### Depression, Anxiety and Vitamin D

Depression and anxiety are mood disorders that affect health and subsequently, quality of life for millions of Americans, as well as individuals world-wide. Increasingly, the role between diet and mental health is being studied, with compelling findings. In recent years, the role of Vitamin D, specifically, has been examined.

According to the National Institutes of Health, studies have shown that low levels of Vitamin D can lead to oxidative stress and inflammation—both of which are involved in the physiological processes associated with anxiety and depression.

But many people don't get the recommended daily intake of Vitamin D (which is 15 mcgs or 600 IUs). This may be because Vitamin D occurs naturally in only a few foods. In fact, it is estimated that most people get only 1/5th or 20% of their daily vitamin D intake from the foods they eat! The other 80% comes from absorption in the skin from sunlight and/or supplementation.

*A simple blood test can detect deficiencies. Talk to your doctor if you think you might be deficient in Vitamin D.*



### Common Sources of Vitamin D

Vitamin D isn't naturally found in many foods, but it can be obtained from fortified milk, fortified cereal, and fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines. The body also makes vitamin D when direct sunlight converts a chemical in the skin into an active form of the vitamin (calciferol).

The amount of vitamin D our skin makes depends on many factors, including the time of day, season, latitude and skin pigmentation. Sunscreen, while important to prevent skin cancer, also can decrease vitamin D production. So it is important to be mindful of getting enough Vitamin D in your diet!

### Foods Rich In Vitamin D

1. Fatty Fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna)
2. Mushrooms
3. Egg Yolks
4. Beef Liver
5. Fortified Dairy Products (milk, yogurt, cheese)
6. Fortified Orange Juice
7. Fortified Cereals

Sources for this month's Newsletter: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9468237/>, <https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/vitamin-d/>, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-vitamin-d/art-20363792>, <https://www.verywellhealth.com/foods-rich-in-vitamin-d-8348470>

The Food and Thought Program works to promote awareness and provide short term counselling around the important link between nutrition and emotional health. For more information or for a referral to the program, please contact the Food and Thought Program

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