



A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

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

HIPPOCRATES

The Surprising Connection Between Dehydration and Mental Health

You may be aware of the important role water plays in many bodily functions, such as protecting your organs, regulating your body temperature and maintaining electrolyte balance. But did you know that hydration also plays a role in mental health and wellbeing? Mental health is an important factor in overall health, and at least three recent studies have demonstrated a link between hydration status and several mental conditions and functions. These include the important areas of mood (such as depression, and anxiety), cognitive performance, energy level, memory and attention.



Continue reading this month's newsletter for more information on the impact of dehydration on emotional health.

Hydration For Body and Brain

The mind-body connection is a circular relationship in which the mind influences the body, and the body influences the mind. Positive thoughts can lead to the release of feel-good neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, while physical sensations (both positive and negative) can influence our mental state. Conditions such as depression, anxiety and chronic stress can lead to behaviors —such as having a sedentary lifestyle, smoking or overeating—that may increase the risk of developing health conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Over time, these chronic illness can increase the likelihood of developing depression, anxiety and cognitive disorders! So, it is important to engage in behaviors that take care of both the body and mind to ensure optimum wellbeing.



How Much Water Is Enough

During the hot summer months, the risk of becoming dehydrated increases, making it more important than ever to stay well-hydrated. But how much is enough? Recent reports have indicated that approximately 75% of Americans do not drink enough. The U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine determined that an adequate daily fluid intake is: about 15.5 cups (3.7 liters) of fluids a day for men and about 11.5 cups (2.7 liters) of fluids a day for women. If that seems like a lot, just remember that several foods contain water naturally, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Examples of water-rich foods include:

- Melons such as watermelon, honeydew and cantaloupe
- Strawberries.
- Pineapple.
- Peaches.
- Oranges.
- Cucumbers.
- Broccoli.
- Celery.



Some Benefits of Hydration:



1. Higher Brain Function And Improved Mental Clarity.
2. Boost Serotonin Production.
3. Decreases Symptoms Of Depression.
4. Lowers Risk Of Dementia.
5. Increased Energy Level.

Sources for this month's Newsletter: <https://www.nutritionnews.abbott/healthy-living/diet-wellness/Hydration-and-Mental-Health--How-Are-They-Related/>, <https://www.cnet.com/health/mental/heres-why-drinking-water-is-the-key-to-good-mental-health/>, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256>

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 at 781-599-0110.

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