

FOOD *AND* THOUGHT

October 2024



A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

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

HIPPOCRATES

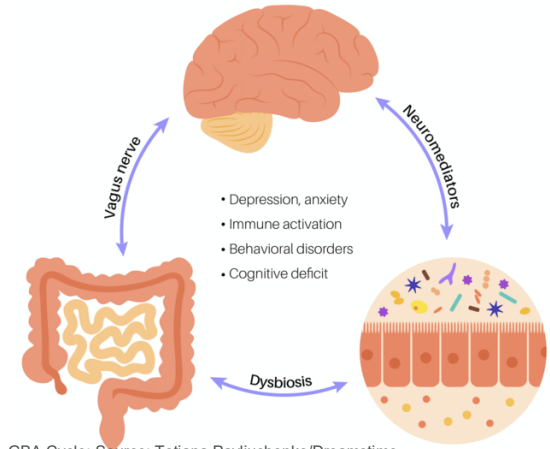
Boost Your Immune System, Boost Your Mental Health!

A strong immune system helps us fight illness and stay healthy. A growing body of research is showing that there is a strong correlation between immune system health and mental health. Not only does our immune system impact our physical and mental health, but our physical and mental health, in turn, affect our immune system! There is a **bi-directional** relationship.

While the exact relationship between these two systems is not yet fully understood, it can be said with certainty that boosting your immune system will help you to feel better, physically and psychologically!

Continue reading this month's newsletter for more information on immunity and mental health.

Bi-Directional Relationship Between Mental Health and the Immune System



Depression, Anxiety and Immunity

Studies over the last few decades have provided sufficient evidence pointing to similarities and overlaps between the immune and emotional responses.

High stress levels can cause depression and anxiety, which may lead to higher levels of systemic inflammation. In the long-term, sustained, high levels of inflammation can translate into an overworked, over-tired immune system that can't properly protect you.

Adjusting your diet is just one way you can help boost your immune health (along with getting enough sleep, stress reduction and hydration). Be sure to eat a balanced diet of fruit, protein, grains and vitamins to help keep your immune system running smoothly.



- Berries
- Fish oil
- Leafy greens
- Nuts and seeds
- Spices
- Citrus fruits
- Poultry
- Brightly colored vegetables



October marks the unofficial beginning of cold and flu season. Follow these simple steps to stay healthy.

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Exercise daily.
- Manage stress
- Get enough rest and sleep

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-happens-when-your-immune-system-gets-stressed-out/>; <https://www.dispatchhealth.com/blog/how-depression-affects-your-immune-system/> <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/flu-safety.html>

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.

This work is supported by the Beverly and Addison Gilbert Hospital Community Benefits Community Grant Program and the Essex County Community Foundation Behavioral Health Partnership Grant.