

Impact of Nutrition on Good Mental Health

Recently, I was doing some research on mental health in the workplace as mental health-related illnesses are now the leading cause of disability in Canada.

Covid19 and the resulting practice of remote working, has increased the incidence of mental health related issues. So, I was interested to explore how we can prevent mental health related issues, such as poor focus and concentration, fatigue, poor sleep, depression, etc from setting in, and I learned that nutrition could play a significant role in preventing some of these health-related issues.

Through much research and testing, it has been determined that the “Mediterranean” diet is one of the best diets to follow to help prevent both mental and physical health issues. This is a diet rich in whole colorful veggies and fruits (like leafy green vegetables, citrus fruit, berries and tomatoes), complex carbohydrates (like whole grains and legumes) proteins like chicken, fish and eggs and plenty of Omega 3 foods (like salmon, olive oil and avocados) and even a little red wine and dark chocolate. That sounds like a pretty healthy and balanced diet.

However, what the Mediterranean diet does not promote are the following foods: high sugar foods and refined grains, processed foods and meats, fried foods and highly saturated fat foods.

So as with any changes you want to incorporate into your life, it requires that you make a plan, start by reducing and eliminating the foods that are on the “not healthy” list because they drain energy and contribute to depression and poor health in general. Substitute these foods with good foods recommended on The Mediterranean diet. Have healthy snacks ready and with you so that you don’t fall back to the bad “snacks” as an example, replace potato chips with walnuts and other healthy nuts.

Gradually, you will notice an improvement in your mood, focus and concentration and sleeping habits and your body will thank you too.

This is a great time to learn some new recipes and experiment. You can start a recipe exchange with your friends and exchange recipes that showcase fresh foods and interesting cooking styles using exotic spices. You can do this through Zoom parties, which can also be lots of fun and a good virtual social event.

Most importantly, in order to stick with a new habit, you need to be consistent. As well, you need to enjoy this journey. So, make it fun!

There is lots of evidence and information available on the Mediterranean diet and all its benefits both for mental good health as well as physical good health and I would encourage everyone to do a little more research on this topic.

