



Depression: More than Feeling Down

Clinical depression is much more than feeling a little down. We all may feel down sometimes, but real depression is more like comparing a cold to the flu. There are major differences in the experience of "feeling down" and depression, including severity of symptoms, impact on general health and quality of life, and implications for treatment. Whereas you might feel down for a few hours or a couple of days, clinical depression lasts all day, most days for at least two weeks. More often it lasts much longer, and left untreated can last for months or even years.

Major depression is also notable in that it impacts your general health. Research (NIH, Depression, 2011) confirms that depression can lead to more pain throughout the body and exacerbate stress-related problems like digestive illnesses, migraines and heart disease. Depression is linked with more intense symptoms with many diseases like Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus and many cancers. In short, "feeling down" will have little impact on your general health, but depression can make most health problems worse.

National Depression Screening Day October 11, 2012

Online and in-person screening will be available at FSAP locations. Visit www.fsap.emory.edu for more information or to take an online screening.



"yourself," instead leading to feeling completely worthless. Symptoms are magnified in depression, so that one feels extreme low energy or detachment from others. It is especially notable that major depression can lead to dangerous thoughts such as "my problems are unsolvable" or "life is not worth living" while feeling down does not lead to this type of thinking. Most seriously, these thoughts can lead to suicide, and that is the worst outcome to untreated depression. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) reported suicide as the 7th leading cause of death in the US in 2010, so the possibility is real. Suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts require immediate intervention by a mental health professional.

Treatment for depression varies depending on the person and severity. For some, it is a mild problem and making changes in diet and exercise can resolve it. For others, treatment is more extensive and may require short or long-term counseling and/or medication. Individuals can improve their own general health and quality of life, or a friend's, simply by addressing the depression. Luckily, help is available through physicians, EAPs and any number of mental health professionals. The Faculty Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) is a great place to start. Call us at 404-727-WELL or take a confidential online self assessment at <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/EMORY>.

Resources:

*National Institutes of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov
American Psychological Institute, www.apa.org/helpcenter/understanding-depression.aspx*

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The Food-Mood Connection

Just as a car needs fuel, we humans need a source of energy to function too...and carbohydrates, proteins and fats fit the bill. Aside from solely providing us with energy, these nutrients serve as building blocks and allow our bodies to create brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. If we are well-nourished and healthy, neurotransmitters positively impact various aspects of everyday life, including boosting performance and mood, improving sleep, and even enhancing memory.

Key Factors in the Food-Mood Connection:

- High-quality carbohydrates (such as fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes and whole grains) promote controlled blood sugar levels while triggering the release of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that enhances calmness and may lessen feelings of depression.
- Consuming proteins (such as lean meat, low fat dairy, tofu, or eggs) causes your body to release dopamine and norepinephrine, possibly helping you to feel more alert.
- Studies suggest that foods rich in omega-3 fats, B-vitamins, and Vitamin D may also help regulate mood and prevent depression. With such a wide variety of food sources for these nutrients, a good rule of thumb is to eat a mixture of food groups daily and change your selections from each group on a regular basis. Visit www.myplate.gov for individualized recommendations and appropriate serving sizes.



- Limit short-term mood and energy boosters, such as caffeinated and sugary foods and beverages. The energy boost they provide is often followed by an energy "crash," not to mention they are often loaded with calories.

Other lifestyle techniques for natural mood and energy regulation include spreading meal and snack times evenly throughout the day, exercising regularly, and drinking plenty of water to stay hydrated. Enhancing your body's brain chemistry through gradual lifestyle change may take several weeks, but you may experience a positive outlook immediately just knowing that you are taking action to improve your food choices and health!

Sources:

American Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, www.eatright.org
Brazilian Journal of Medical and Biomedical Research,
<http://ref.scielo.org/33bcqj>

Diane N. Weaver, MS, RD, LD, Wellness Specialist



This year, the CDC is recommending flu shots for all persons over 6 months of age. Flu shots are particularly important for individuals with asthma, diabetes, heart disease, chronic illnesses, persons over age 65 and caregivers for children or the elderly. In addition, Emory Healthcare **REQUIRES** flu shots for all Emory employees working in Emory Healthcare facilities.

For more information about when and where to get your flu shot:

- EU employees: Visit www.fsap.emory.edu/flu for all the details.
- EHC employees and EU employees working in an EHC facility: You must pre-register for your flu shot. Please visit the intranet (www.ourehc.org) for schedules and more information.

FLU SHOTS 2012

Fruit & Veggie Top Ten

When it comes to fruits and vegetables, it is well known that they are a healthy part of any diet. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors (green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions) provides your body with many different vitamins and minerals, such as fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. However, many of us have trouble consuming the recommended 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Follow these Top Ten strategies to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables in your daily diet:



10 Dried Fruits - Take advantage of all the different dried fruits that you can find in the supermarket. You can sprinkle them on salads, cereals, and yogurt.

9 Leftovers - How many of us have some leftover vegetables in the fridge and don't know what to do with them to make them attractive to eat? Remix them into a whole new meal! Add them to sandwich wraps, burritos or pair them with pasta.

8 Convenience - Although fresh veggies are best, frozen is a perfect substitution, especially when time is short. Pick up some frozen snap peas and whip yourself up a stir-fry!

Chickpea and Spinach Curry

Ingredients:

1 cup onion, coarsely chopped
1 ½ tbsp fresh ginger, chopped or grated
1 tsp olive oil
1 ½ tsp curry powder
1 19-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes (low sodium)
1 10-ounce bag fresh spinach, stems removed
½ cup water



7 Experiment - Make Wednesday New Veggie or Fruit Day! Try to work in an unfamiliar vegetable or fruit into your lunch or dinner meal.

6 Seasonings - Buy plain (unseasoned) frozen vegetables and play around with seasoning combinations using herbs, lemon juice, or garlic.

5 100% Juice - Only purchase vegetable and fruit juices that say "100% juice." There are enough natural goodies to enjoy in fruits and vegetables, no need for added sweeteners!

4 Smoothies for Breakfast - You can purchase frozen fruit or freeze any fresh fruit that may be approaching ripeness. They both make great ingredients for smoothies.

3 Easy to Grab & Go - Have fresh fruit located in convenient places at home and at work so that you always have the option to choose a fruit or vegetable for a snack or to supplement your meal.

2 Meatless Meals - Plan a meatless meal. You can use beans or tofu as the protein sources and add a variety of vegetables and/or fruits to finish off the meal.

1 Make Extra - When preparing recipes, always add plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Now that you have the TOP TEN, you know how to put those extras to good use!

More information: www.fruitandveggiesmorematters.org
Dawn McMillian, MS, RD, Wellness Specialist

Directions: Combine onion and ginger in food processor and pulse until minced. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion mixture and curry powder. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add chickpeas and tomatoes, simmering for 2 minutes. Stir in spinach and water. Cook another minute until spinach wilts and serve over brown rice.

Variation: Try with other beans, such as navy beans, black-eyed peas or lentils instead of chickpeas. These types of beans should be cooked before using in this recipe.

Yield: 6 servings (1/2 cup). Nutrition Information Per Serving:
150 Calories; 2 g Fat; 590 mg Sodium; 28 g Carbohydrate;
6 g Fiber, 7 g Protein

Source: *Fruit& Veggies More Matters Recipe Book*
Reviewed by: Dawn McMillian, MS, RD, Wellness Specialist

