

Depression and Diet

Can what you eat help improve your mood or cause depression? Here are some facts that can help you understand the relationship between depression and diet.

Folate

Folate may help to improve mood by preventing an excess of homocysteine from forming in the body. This is important because homocysteine prevents blood and other nutrients from reaching the brain, and interferes with the production of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine—all regulators of mood, sleep, and appetite. Folate is found in:

- Liver
- Mushrooms
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Lean beef
- Potatoes
- Whole-wheat bread
- Citrus fruits
- Peanuts
- Dried beans
- Wheat germ
- Peas
- Strawberries

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids might increase the volume of gray matter in the parts of the brain responsible for regulating emotions. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in:

- Salmon
- Herring
- Anchovies
- Tuna
- Flaxseed
- Canola oil
- Soy nuts
- Walnuts
- Butternuts (similar to walnuts)

Vitamin D

Vitamin D aids in the production of serotonin. Vitamin D is found in:

- Fish-liver oils
- Fortified milk
- Herring
- Salmon
- Canned sardines
- Fortified orange juice

- Fortified cereal

Magnesium

Magnesium deficiency, although rare, may lead to depression, according to some sources. Magnesium is found in:

- Seeds
- Nuts, especially cashews and peanuts
- Legumes
- Cereal
- Dark-green vegetables
- Milk
- Wheat germ

References and recommended readings

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