

Depression – Fact Sheet

Depression affects approximately 121 million people worldwide, and is a condition that affects people mentally and physically in a variety of different ways. The following symptoms are used to diagnose depression:

1. Depressed mood for most of the day, or nearly everyday
2. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all activities, nearly everyday
3. Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia nearly everyday
5. Psychomotor agitation or retardation nearly everyday
6. Fatigue or loss of energy nearly everyday
7. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness nearly everyday
9. Recurrent thoughts of death

If five or more of these symptoms are experienced and one of the symptoms is depressed mood or loss of interest it is likely that you have depression.

Depression is multifactorial and some of the leading factors that can contribute include; genetics, brain dysregulation (neurotransmitter imbalances), stressful life events, co-morbid medical, hormonal or metabolic conditions, medications, recreational drugs, nutrient and cofactor deficiencies, food allergies, heavy metal toxicity and allergy.

Nutritional Recommendations

- Adequate intake of protein is essential as it is important for the synthesis of neurotransmitters, the production of serotonin and stabilising blood sugar levels.
- Essential fatty acids, particularly omega 3's has been associated with improved mood.
- Complex carbohydrates, preferably not grain based, as they will have a low GI and be rich in soluble fibre.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables (raw is best), particularly leafy greens as these foods provide a lot of essential antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.
- Fresh salmon and turkey are high in tryptophan and can lift mood.
- Avoid refined carbohydrates and sugars, caffeine, alcohol, artificial sugars and other chemical containing products as these foods can be detrimental to blood sugar levels, affect sleep, reduce serotonin levels and promote essential vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Other Suggestions

- Take part in a form of exercise that you like as it has been shown to improve symptoms associated with depression.
- Psychological and relaxation therapies.
- Sleep management.

Customised nutritional plans comprising of a specific food plan with the support of nutrient/herbal supplements can be very effective in the management of depression. If you require support please visit www.good4younutrition.com.au