

March is Nutrition Month!

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We all know that nutrition can affect our physical wellness, but did you know it affects our mental wellness, too?!

It's still winter and you may have the blues, not getting outside as much into the light (which helps us sleep well later on at night), feeling cold and generally blah. While we can't control the cold weather and dark days that may be getting us down, we can control the food we eat. If you feel sluggish, tired, unmotivated or even depressed take a look at your diet.

Is my poor diet and lack of activity harming my grades, and what can I do about it?

Likely. There are three main dietary considerations that affect our mental wellbeing: consumption of sugar and high carbohydrates, lack of B vitamins and omega 3s.

Sugar is addictive. There is a strong correlation between frequent consumption of high carbohydrates (sugar particularly) and feeling high and then blue. It makes our blood sugar imbalanced. When we don't manage our blood sugar levels by eating good carbohydrates without added sugar like fruits and vegetables, we often become irritable, have sleep problems, lack focus and have memory issues. These symptoms can greatly affect your school performance as your concentration suffers in class and ultimately your grades.

In addition, we need to make sure we are getting enough B vitamins. They help the brain regulate your mood. B vitamins help balance serotonin levels in the brain. Particularly, you need B12, B6 and B9 (folic acid). By increasing your B vitamins you can relieve your symptoms of melancholy and depression. You can take a B vitamin complex supplement, daily, and also eat foods high in vitamin B. B12 is found in eggs, meat and dairy; B6: meat, avocados, spinach, sunflower seed and bananas; B9 folic acid: dark leafy vegetables, asparagus, beans, peanuts and sunflower seeds.

Another way to avoid the blues is by eating fish high in omega 3s. Like the Bs, it also influences serotonin interaction in the brain. Omega 3s are found in oily fish, such as salmon, herring, mackerel and tuna. Try eating fish twice a week. If you don't like fish, you can use oil capsule supplements.

If you want to kick the blues, feel happier, be more active and get better grades, revamp your meal plans and snacks. The good news about a bad habit is that it takes only three weeks to break it. Try going three weeks without eating junk food and sugary drinks and replace them with nutrient dense snacks such as no spray or organic fruits and vegetables, seeds/nuts, cheese and sugarless drinks. Replace your typical dessert with a yoghurt or recipe's low in sugar. And don't forget to go outside for a walk or activity to get the light we need in the day time to sleep well at night

Happy munching ☺.