

When it comes to taking care of your mental health, what practices come to mind?

Therapy, meditation, deep breathing exercises, affirmations; probably something along those lines, right? That's good, those are all beneficial.

...but, what about food?

In all of the articles you've read, health quote pages you've skimmed, and even doctors or therapists you've spoken to, how many have talked to you about your diet?

Hopefully at least a few. Nutrition is one of the most influential factors in determining the overall state of our health, [especially when it comes to our minds](#).

Regardless of where your health is now or what your short- and long-term goals are, prioritizing your nutrition is one of the best habits you can establish for yourself.

In this article, we're going to take a closer look at the role that food plays in our health, and then we'll identify the key ways that nutrition affects mental health.

The importance of nutrition

What we eat and drink is important, but we're rarely given the education and tools for how to actually properly and sustainably implement nutrition in our lives.

Lack of awareness paired with the temptation of buying all the colorful, fun-looking (but often toxic) foods in the grocery store, it's no wonder there's a health crisis in the United States. So many of us are sick, and all we've been told is "it is what it is."

Nutrition matters because everything we consume is going to be processed or absorbed by the body in some way. Every unhealthy and harmful ingredient is felt by the body, and it can only take so much self-abuse before it starts to break down, and fall apart.

Poor diet can lead to serious health issues. Those who frequently indulge toxic foods are [especially at risk](#) for developing or exacerbating various diseases and disorders.

Benefits of nutrition

Food is essential to live, and our bodies need a wide variety of foods to thrive. Protein, fat, fiber, carbs, even sugar; these are all vital components for strong health and body.

There's also a lot of contradicting information around the benefits of certain foods over others, but we're not going to go into that in this article.

Today, we're going to focus on the benefits of prioritizing your nutrition as a whole.

Some of these benefits include:

- Improving overall health (organs, immune system, metabolism)
- Helping maintain a healthy weight (and helping lose excess fat)
- Promoting deeper, more restful sleep cycles
- Boosting energy levels
- Improving mental health
- Strengthening immune system
- Promoting steady, easier aging

Nutrition is essential in our everyday lives, but it's an even more vital practice for those struggling with some form of a mental health condition, illness or disorder.

Mental health and nutrition

When it comes to how nutrition affects mental health, [the research](#) is definitive: all of the foods and drinks we consume directly affect the state of our mental health.

While a fair amount of emphasis is often placed upon the importance of maintaining our physical health (exercising, going outside, getting sunshine), the emphasis on nutrition is often much less. At best, it's incredibly confusing.

It doesn't help that [most doctors don't prioritize nutrition](#) in their own lives, let alone have the resources to support their patients around how to implement it in theirs.

In the United States, it's more common to be prescribed a pill to help "manage" an issue than to be given the knowledge and tools to heal it (or significantly relieve it).

Some believe it's the result of an education system that doesn't teach practical nutrition, and fuels poor eating habits through vending machines and cafeteria food.

Others believe that this mass-deterioration of mental health is part of a larger scheme, suggesting it may be connected to how much of our food has been bought by (company-wise) or is outsourced from other countries.

There are many theories around why nutrition and health is so poor in America, but there's good news too: it's not too late to start healing your body, and your mind.

It can be overwhelming to know where to begin with taking charge of your health, but it's not something you have to go through alone — we're here to help.

Start your recovery today

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