

Talking Tazewell

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The Wellness Playbook

A new year; another January, here again, reminding us that we have a fresh slate for new beginnings, opportunities to grow, and a chance to make some changes you've been thinking about making.

Of course we don't need to wait for a new year to make these changes - every day is an chance to release things that are no longer serving you, but the symbology behind a new year gives the change an extra sense of meaning.

This edition, we will talk about healthy habits to begin implementing in the new year, specifically, how the brain processes the food we eat. The habits we will discuss, at the surface, seem to benefit physical health, but we'll dive a bit deeper and explore how changing our habits can actually benefit the chemicals in our brain - ultimately improving our mental health.

Together, we can continue to create communities where safety, healing, and hope are possible for everyone.



DID YOU KNOW...

12% of Tazewell County residents say they think that drinking more than 2 sugary or sweetened drinks each day puts your health at no or slight risk of obesity.

BUT ACTUALLY...

Not only does consumption of sugary or sweetened drinks on a regular basis increase your risk of obesity, but high levels of sugar intake can have a negative effect on your mental health as well.

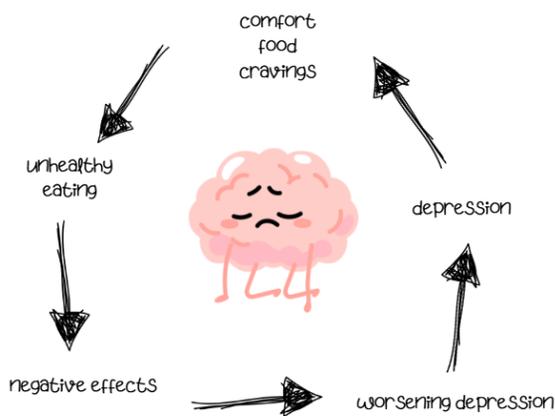
Let's talk about it!



More than 90% of the serotonin* produced by your body starts in your gastrointestinal tract. So, at the same time your digestive system is working to digest your food, it is simultaneously working to help you regulate your emotions. This shows that the food you eat can have just as profound an effect on your brain as the medications you take.

Foods that are high in sugar, fat, carbohydrates and caffeine can cultivate or worsen symptoms of anxiety. Additionally, consuming a lot of ultra-processed foods can lead to dysfunction in certain parts of your brain such as the amygdala and hippocampus. If your amygdala is over functioning/hyperactive, it can lead to excessive fear, anxiety and stress responses.

Depression can make things like self-care (which includes fixing a healthy meal) a real challenge. In the moment, we think, "I want to feel better" and convenient, yummy foods like potato chips or ice cream seem to fix it all in that moment. However... the opposite is the truth. Indulging in foods that have high levels of sugar can lead to and worsen symptoms of depression.



Instead of grabbing the convenient, salt, instant gratification snack, consider swapping for something rich in:

Vitamins A, B1, B6, B9, B12, C, D, E or K, Iron, Magnesium, Potassium and Zinc - not only do all of these vitamins have physical benefits, like reducing inflammation or improving cardiovascular health, but they all directly contribute to improvements in mood, memory, focus, sleep, fatigue, anxiety.

Did any of this surprise you? Are you looking to learn more?

Pick up a copy of "This Is Your Brain On Food: An Indispensable Guide to the Surprising Foods That Fight Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, OCD, ADHD and More" to learn about changing food habits for more than just dropping a few pounds.

*serotonin: a chemical messenger, or neurotransmitter, that regulates things like mood, sleep, appetite, learning/memory and more.

*amygdala: the part of your brain that regulates fight or flight response through adrenaline and epinephrine production.

*hippocampus: the part of your brain that manages stress through dopamine production.

HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

SEND IT OUR WAY!

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