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Should the Mediterranean diet be the new gold standard for healing depression?

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Diet Tips With Toni Marinucci, USA

“You are what you eat” is not a saying that should be taken lightly. How we eat, when we eat, and why we eat affects our health in many ways. We can confidently say that a diet low in nutrient-dense foods such as nuts, seeds, omega-3’s, fruits, vegetables, and legumes is strongly associated with poor physical health outcomes. For example, chronic diseases like hypertension, obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and more. But can a poor diet affect our mental health as well? Several evidence-based studies show that obese adults have higher incidences of depression, begging the question of whether it is the physical weight of the person that is causing the depression or the diet they are consuming on a regular basis. In addition, we must ask if the traditional medications usually prescribed for depression are effectively treating the mental illness, putting a Band-Aid on a bigger issue, or making it all worse. Among the various side effects of these medicines, weight gain is a common one, which you can argue exacerbates the patient’s physical health and in return weakens their mental health. Although nutrition interventions such as the Mediterranean Diet are used as a gold standard to treat obesity, diet modification is often an afterthought when it comes to treating depression. In my oral presentation, I will provide evidence-based dietary applications that a person suffering from depression can use as an integrative and/or complementary approach to healing their mental health.

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