



HEALTH NOTES



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Adventist Medical
Evangelism Network

AMEN's mission is to motivate, train, and equip Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world, hastening His return.

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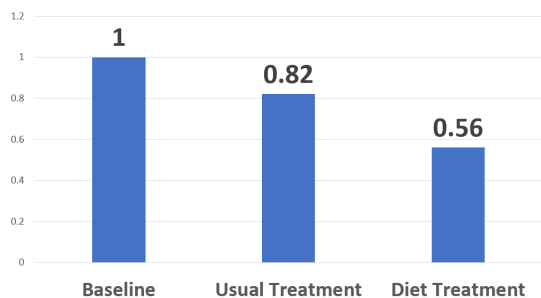
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Diet & Depression—Nutritional Psychiatry

The relationship between diet and mental illness is beginning to show up in population studies that are published in scientific literature. One researcher compiled the results from four large studies that contained 36,556 adults.¹

In one study, a randomized sample of people with major depression were given 7 one-hour educational sessions with a dietician. They were taught the importance of preparing and eating the plant-rich Mediterranean diet. The control group had conventional therapy and social support without dietary instruction. At the end of just 12 weeks those with the improved diet had much less depression (32%) than those with usual treatment for depression.²

Depression Treatment at 12 Weeks



To make sure the benefits of diet on depression were due to the healthy diet and no other factors, the authors considered the age, sex, income, body size, smoking, and physical activity of the participants.

In a further analysis of this same study, it was found that the dietary treatment of depression cost less than conventional therapy. Food is cheaper than pills. There was a further positive economic gain from diet therapy for depression

because the participants lost less work and were more productive members of society.³

Part of the explanation for the benefits of diet on the brain come from the anti-inflammatory effects of a plant-based diet on neurotransmitters in the brain that affect mood. Diet is a key modulator of the microbes in the colon and the variety and number of chemical molecules they release into the bloodstream. These chemicals affect the brain.

God cautions us to eat just what is good for us. Isaiah 55:2 (NKJV) says, "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good." Diet choices can help us avoid or treat depression.



More than 100 years ago Mrs. White stressed the connection between diet and the brain. “If we are believers in Jesus Christ, we shall seek to become intelligent as to how to keep the brain clear and active, that not a tittle of our influence shall be lost. We should seek to become laborers together with God by keeping the system in such a condition that it can render perfect service. It is poor policy indeed, to ill-treat the digestive organs, upon which the happiness of the whole being so largely depends. When the stomach is disturbed, the mind is disturbed, and the brain nerve power is weakened. It therefore becomes a religious duty with every soul to learn the science of healthful living, to keep the question of diet in mind, and to treat the matter conscientiously.” This Day with God 206.

¹ Camille Lessale, “Plant-rich diet may help prevent depression—new evidence” The Conversation, September 26, 2018. 3 pages

² F. N. Jacka et.al, “A randomized controlled trial of dietary improvement for adults with major depression (the SMILES trial).” BioMed Central Medicine, 2017 13 pages.

³ M. L. Chatterton, et.al, “Economic evaluation of a dietary intervention for adults with major depression (the SMILES trial). BMC Public Health 2018 11 pages.

The graph was created by the author based on data found in reference 2.

