SYNERGY
ACUPUNCTURE

Nutrition & Lifestyle Guide for Stress, Anxiety & Depression

Nutrition:

- Your diet has a huge influence on your emotional and psychological well-being
- The 'gut' is regarded as the 2nd brain because it has just as many neurons (nerve cells) as the brain does
- Most of the serotonin (neurotransmitter that helps regulate sleep, appetite, mood and pain) in your body (up to 80%) is produced in the GI tract
- Therefore we want to reduce as much inflammation in the gut and digestive tract as possible
- *But first, what are common causes of inflammation?*
    - Free radicals caused by fried foods, air pollution, smoking and alcohol, pesticides, and more
    - Endotoxins found in animal foods cause a surge of inflammation
- *What can I do to maximize the health of my gut?*
    - Diets high in fruits and vegetables have been associated with a greater sense of being happy because they contain high levels of vitamin C which is a co-factor in the production of dopamine (neurotransmitter responsible for motivation and enthusiasm in life)
    - Fruits and vegetables are also high in antioxidants which reduce inflammation and protect the body against stress hormones and depression
    - Studies show that a whole-food plant-based diet that is high in carbs and low in saturated fats are associated with less depression, greater mood and higher productivity
    - Depression is linked to higher levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein. Therefore a diet that is anti-inflammatory is also best for combating

depression and a plant based diet has been shown to lower C-reactive protein better than any diet, lowers by 30% in just 2 weeks
- Spices are great at lowering inflammation in the body, start cooking with spices like turmeric, ginger, saffron, rosemary and clove
- Eat fermented foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, tempeh, dairy free yogurt (coconut-based), kombucha (avoid excess consumption) to promote a healthy gut flora
- The bacteria in your gut break down these foods into healthy nutrients for your body to use for physical and mental wellness

Breathing Exercises

- Practice mindful breathing upon waking up and before bed for 10 minutes
- Lay down or sit comfortably and breath through your nose. Focus on your breath as it exits and enters your nose. If your mind wanders, catch yourself and return to mindful breathing. Don't be hard on yourself if you keep getting distracted with thoughts! In today's society we are bombarded with different stimuli which conditions our mind to race and have ruminating thoughts.
- When you find yourself in a tense or anxious state, practice 4-7-8 breathing or 2-4-6 breathing
- Breath in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds
- Breath in for 2 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 6 seconds
- This encourages the parasympathetic nervous system to calm your mind and reduce your heart rate.

Essential Oils & Aromatherapy

- Aromatherapy with the use of lavender has been shown to decrease stress, anxiety and depression
- Experiment with different essential oils and see which one works best for you

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