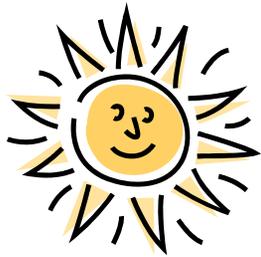


SEE YOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IF:

1. You are concerned that your child or teen might hurt himself or others.
2. You want an accurate diagnosis and to rule out other conditions.
3. You want to try medications or to find out if medications might be causing mood problems.
4. You would like a referral to another health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed acupuncturist, massage therapist or social worker.
5. Natural therapies are not enough.
6. You have any other questions.



WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

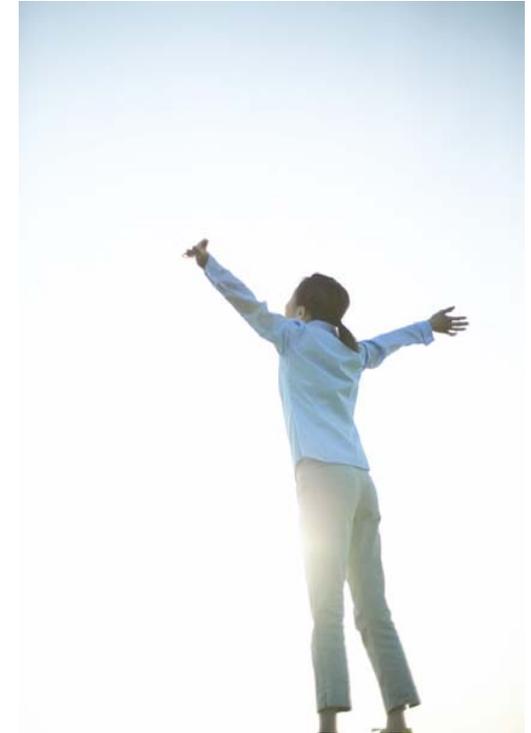
Mental health is an optimal state of well-being that is affected by genetics, physical health and our environment, including our relationships. Developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is the foundation for mental and emotional as well as physical health. Families can support healthy habits and environments that promote optimal mental health.



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IMPROVING DEPRESSION, NATURALLY



OPTIMIZING MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH: STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES

POSITIVE MOODS & MENTAL HEALTH, NATURALLY

Great physical health is characterized by strength, flexibility, comfort, energy, endurance, and coordination. Similarly, great mental health includes feeling cheerful, hopeful, confident, resilient, adaptable and connected to the people and world around us. Mental health is an optimal state of well-being.

1. Individuals and families can improve mental health through healthy lifestyles.
2. Healthy choices can fit every budget.
3. Your doctor can help you track your success and give you additional ideas.

LIGHTEN UP

Sunshine boosts mood. Aim for 30-60 minutes outdoors daily. Bright lights, especially in the early morning can also help. Light can work as well as medicine to help with depression.

SLEEP SOUNDLY

Aim for at least 7 – 8 hours of sleep nightly. Promote sleep with a hot shower or bath before bed; a back, hand or foot rub from someone who cares; relaxing music; having a cool, dark room; and using the bed just for sleep (not homework, TV or telephone).

CONNECT WITH SOMEONE

Talk it out. Find a friend, teacher, coach, pastor, or counselor who is a good listener. Ask them to listen to you as you talk it out.

TIP: Combine sunshine, exercise, and social connections. Go for a 30 minute walk each day with a pet, a supportive relative or friend.

EAT WISELY

1. Eat breakfast daily. Eat protein-rich foods at breakfast and lunch. Protein helps keep your blood sugar stable and fuels your brain the fuel it needs.
2. Eat fish twice a week. Fish is brain and mood food!
3. Choose colorful fruits and vegetables, beans, brown rice, oatmeal and whole wheat bread. They contain vitamins, fiber and minerals your brain needs.
4. Avoid fried food, candy, high fructose corn syrup, and chips. They're called junk food for a reason!

GO for GRATITUDE For what do you feel gratitude or appreciation? In a journal, write down at least 3 – 5 people, places, events, or things each day for which you feel grateful.



STEP IT UP!

Exercise or play so hard you break a sweat for at least 30 minutes a day. It's as effective as many medications in boosting mood.

PRACTICE KINDNESS

Helping other people makes us feel better about ourselves. Do yourself a favor and be nice to someone else. Keep a journal of all the little things you do for others.

TURN OFF THE TV

Free yourself from TV ads trying to convince you to buy things to be happy. They are usually more interested in their profits than your happiness. Free the bedroom of the tyranny of TV.

ADDRESS STRESS

Whether you try yoga, meditation or just some time away from it all in nature, addressing stress can improve your mood.

WHAT SUPPLEMENTS?

1. Take a multivitamin/mineral daily to ensure minimum needs are met. Folate, B and D vitamins, calcium, magnesium and folate are essential for healthy moods.
2. Fish oil supplements (omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA) are brain nutrients and have less mercury than many fish.
3. Talk with your doctor before starting St. Johns wort, Sam-E, 5-HTP, L-tryptophan, or other herbs or supplements. There are big variations in the quality and some are costly.