

[IMAGE]

## Optimize Your Mental Health With the Power of Nutrition

By Editorial Staff

Exercise and proper diet are considered the hallmarks of physical health, helping people lose weight, build lean muscle, enhance their athletic performance and reduce disease risk. But wait: Quality of life isn't just about the physical; your mental health is important, too. Fortunately, exercise and nutrition can optimize the mental side of the equation, too. Let's look at the nutrition side of things, specifically a new study that connects the dots between sound dietary choices and psychological well-being.

Not eating enough fruits and vegetables? It could be impacting your mental health, suggests a study in *Social Science and Medicine*. Increasing the quantity and frequency of fruits and veggie consumption improves mental well-being; and according to the study authors, it doesn't take much. Writing about their findings, the researchers stated: "The estimates from our work suggest that adding one portion to your diet per day could be as beneficial to mental well-being as going for a walk on an extra seven to eight days a month. One portion is equal to one cup of raw vegetables (the size of a fist), half a cup of cooked vegetables or chopped fruit, or one piece of whole fruit."

This certainly isn't the first study to suggest fruit and vegetable consumption and mental health are linked ... but it is the latest, adding to a growing body of evidence that simple dietary choices can help optimize your well-being. And isn't that what we all want?

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