

# Dietitians Support Mental Health

Promote • Prevent • Treat



## The facts:

- 1 in 5 Canadians experience mental health problems, and **all** Canadians benefit from promotion of positive mental health<sup>1,2</sup>
- People with chronic medical conditions are more likely to experience mental health issues, **and** those with mental illness are more likely to develop chronic health conditions<sup>3</sup>
- 1 in 8 Canadian households are food insecure. Food insecurity increases risk of mental health issues, and people with mental health conditions are more likely to be food insecure<sup>3</sup>

## Dietitians promote wellness

- Evidence shows optimal nutrition promotes positive mental health<sup>3</sup>
- Dietitian-led programs in prenatal nutrition, breastfeeding support, and children's nutrition support lifelong healthy eating habits<sup>3</sup>
- Dietitians advocate for healthy food environments to support wellness where people live, work, and play

## Healthy diets prevent mental health conditions

- A healthy diet reduces the risk of:
  - depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders<sup>4-6</sup>
  - dementia and cognitive decline<sup>7</sup>
- Dietitians translate the science of nutrition into advice everyone can use, and tailor it to individual circumstances

## Dietitian treatment improves outcomes

- Clients receiving individualized nutrition counselling from a dietitian have significantly reduced symptoms of **depression**<sup>4-6</sup>
- Dietitian-provided nutrition education and individualized treatment is important in recovery from **substance abuse and addictions**<sup>3,8,9</sup>
- Shorter hospital stays and more effective rehabilitation for **eating disorder** patients is associated with more dietitian care<sup>10,11</sup>
- Dietitians plan nutrition strategies for children with **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. Risk of nutrient deficiencies include food fixations and aversions which may be complicated by parental experimentation with restricted diets<sup>12-15</sup>
- Common side effects of psychiatric medications include weight gain, dyslipidemia, malnutrition.<sup>3,16</sup> Dietitians help clients manage side effects to improve health and support medication adherence



## References

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