A Healthy Diet May Lead to Better Mental Health

People who eat more fruits and veggies report improvements in their mental well-being and satisfaction with life.

February 21, 2019 By Alicia Green

Daily consumption of produce is linked to improved physical health. Now, new research published in the journal Social Science & Medicine suggests that regularly including such healthy foods in one's diet may enhance mental health as well, reports CNN.

For the analysis, scientists followed about 50,000 participants from the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) between 2010 and 2017 in order to examine the relationship between the eating of fruits and vegetables and mental well-being. (The UKHLS is the largest longitudinal investigation of its kind and provides vital evidence about the effect of dietary changes on people's psychological state.)

After researchers accounted for several other factors that define mental wellness, such as physical health, income and consumption of foods besides fruits and veggies, findings showed that folks reported experiencing better mental well-being and life satisfaction when they ate more produce. (Scientists suggested that simply eating an extra piece of fruit each day or pairing a salad with a meal would work.)

These results add to a growing body of evidence that shows that eating fruits and vegetables is positively related to boosted levels of mental well-being. In addition, researchers said large trials are needed to show that this link is causal.

Investigators cautioned, however, that consuming these healthy foods isn't a substitute for medical treatment, just an easy way to enhance mental health.

Click here to learn how a healthy diet may also protect brain function.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.