Is your diet making you SAD?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs in the winter, peaking in January and February and fading by early spring. Approximately 6% of Americans are affected by SAD each year, and that's not including the 15% who suffer from a milder version of the blues.

Some experts believe that reduced sunlight and resulting lower levels of vitamin D during the winter months are the main culprits for depression, however, a clear cause has yet to be determined.

Treatment for SAD typically involves light therapy, psychotherapy and medication. New research is also showing that increasing certain nutrient levels in your diet may be a powerful way to improve your mood and stave off depression.

Here's a look at some of the foods that are purported to give your brain a positive boost. As with any medical issue, it's important to talk with your doctor about getting treated if you're experiencing signs of depression.

Foods that fight depression

Dietary Source	Why it helps
Fatty fish (salmon, tuna, sardines, rainbow trout), fish oils, fortified milk, egg yolks	Contain high levels of vitamin D and omega-3s
Fruits (berries, pomegranate, grapefruit, pineapple), legumes (broad and soy beans), veggies (kale, peppers, spinach, beets) and nuts and seeds	Rich in antioxidants, including beta-carotene and vitamins C and E, which can have a significant impact on mood
Poultry, beans, tofu, lentils, seafood and meat	Contain L-tyrosine and L-tryptophan, amino acids used by the brain to make dopamine and serotonin, which are linked to mood
Oats, sweet corn, tomatoes, ginger, bananas, radishes and barley	Contain melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep. Deficient melatonin levels can lead to insomnia and depression
Lentils, brown rice and potatoes	Complex carbs with small amounts of fat and protein help stimulate serotonin production, a feel-good chemical in the brain

Health and Wellness Article

Sources

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/seasonal-affective-disorder/DS00195
http://www.livestrong.com/article/39890-foods-can-anxiety-depression/
http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/diet-recovery

This material is provided for informational use only and should not be construed as medical advice or used in place of consulting a licensed medical professional. You should consult with your doctor.