



Honoring God With Our Bodies

■ by Stephanie Shelton, PhD, LCSW

As Paul writes to the church of Corinth, we are to treat our bodies as a temple to honor God since our bodies are not our own but rather borrowed from God who has purchased it with the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). So, the question is, how do we honor God with our bodies. One way to use our bodies to honor God is to give it the nutrition needed to function properly.

As a mental health professional, I have always had an interest in what affects our emotional and mental health. Scientific research is showing how the foods we put into our bodies affect our emotional wellbeing. I am excited about sharing with you some of this research in several upcoming articles that target specific mental and emotional disorders. But first, we need to look at how nutrition plays a role in the body's function.

Everything Works Together

The amazing thing about our bodies is that everything works together to perform each function. The foods that we put into our body serve a purpose for the body; such like gas and oil is used to make a car work properly certain nutrition is needed to make the body work properly. Here are some basic nutritional needs for the body.

- **PROTEINS:** Protein is made up of amino acids which is the foundation for your cells to perform all its functions. Proteins assist in building new cells and repairing old cells. They also develop hormones and enzymes as well as keep your immune system working¹.
- **CARBOHYDRATES:** Carbohydrates give the body energy fast; whatever energy is not used it is then stored as fat for later use¹.
- **FATS:** Fats are needed to grow and produce new cells and hormones as well as assist in the transportation of some vitamins throughout the body. Fat is also used to protect organs against trauma. Excess calories are stored as fat to be used as a reserve for energy.
- **VITAMINS:** Vitamins are key components to help with strong bones; healthy skin, hair, and nails; as well as vision¹.
- **MINERALS:** Minerals are used to control the body's functions. For example, the body's nerve and muscle function is assisted by potassium¹.
- **WATER:** Water has three main functions; it regulates temperature, gets rid of waste, and transports nutrients throughout the body¹.



The Negative Impact of Poor Nutrition

Not only are there certain nutritional properties that help with the body's functions but there is also nutrition that we put in our bodies that have a negative impact on the function of the body. One example is the consumption of too much sugar. When a body consumes more than the recommended amount of daily sugar the effect can damage many organs of the body².

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- **PANCREAS:** As the sugar is consumed the pancreas produces insulin; too much sugar and the pancreas can get overworked and cause too much production of insulin.
- **LIVER:** The liver, whose function is to turn the sugar into energy, then becomes resistant to the insulin which leads to type II diabetes.
- **HEART:** In addition, the excess insulin causes the arteries to grow and tighten leading to heart disease.
- **KIDNEYS:** The kidneys, that are responsible for filtering out the blood sugar will start to let sugar into the urine which could lead to kidney failure.

At times the body experiences certain deficits which mean that certain nutrition may be needed to fill in those deficits. There may also be nutrition that enhances those deficits. Some deficits may manifest as mental health and emotional disorders. Going back to the excess sugar - there is a link to excess sugar and the increase of addictive behavior as well as anxiety and depressive symptoms².



Upcoming Articles in this Series

As different disorders have some similar nutritional needs there are some variations. Therefore, there will be four separate articles issued specific to four different mental health and emotional disorders; they are as follows:

Article 1 will focus on nutrition specific to mood disorders; it will be highlighted in the March/April Issue.

Article 2 will focus on nutrition specific to Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD); it will be highlighted in the May/June Issue.

Article 3 will focus on nutrition specific to psychosis; it will be highlighted in the July/August issue.

Article 4 will focus on nutrition specific to stress and anxiety; it will be highlighted in the September/October issue.

As research has shown, and I will elaborate on in future articles, nutrition can play a vital role in the treatment of mental health and emotional disorders. However, it is important to understand that nutrition should not be the only treatment option, the scriptures are very insistent that Christian counseling is needed as well as stated in Proverbs 11:14, "Where there is no guidance the people fall but, in abundance of counselors there is victory." ■

References

¹Breast Cancer.org (2016). How your body gets nutrients from food. https://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/healthy_eat/nutrients

²Hughes, Locke (2017). How does too much sugar affect your body? <https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/features/how-sugar-affects-your-body>



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