Vitamin D Deficiency and Winter Blues

Many of us call the November-February downturn in mood the winter blues, but the official name for it is Seasonal Affective Disorder or “SAD”. A simple explanation is the greatly reduced light and significant drops in Vitamin D reduce our bodies’ ability to produce serotonin, which is the “feel good” chemical. Barring sitting under expensive sun-mimicking lights or running away for a wonderful sun-filled vacation mid-winter, there are some things you can work into your diet that may reduce the effects of SAD.

The most common source of Vitamin D is found in meat proteins such as chicken breast, beef, fortified milk products, oily fish and eggs. Begin your day with oatmeal or a vitamin D fortified cereal with low-fat or soy milk, and add two servings of lean meat proteins to your remaining meals. Energy levels will improve and you will not find yourself in your kitchen as often scratching your head looking for “something” good. A vitamin D deficiency also contributes to those cravings for sweets and fast-burning carbohydrates as our bodies try to find fuel to consume. If you do snack, opt for nuts, popcorn, cheese, whole grain crackers and lean meats.

Choosing healthier foods to help boost your vitamin D and serotonin levels seems like a simple solution for a problem like SAD that feels so complex. Increasing your vitamin D intake will give you noticeably increased energy levels and you’ll suffer less of the depressant symptoms within days.