

How Mental Health Affects Physical Health

By: Defining Wellness Centers



About one-third of people with a physical health condition also suffer from some form of mental issue. This isn't just some random statistic. Your mental health affects your physical health, and vice versa. The proof is in the pudding... literally.

If you consume nothing but chocolate pudding for an entire day, chances are you'd feel quite ill. While this is just a silly example, the point it drives home is important. If you're depressed and anxious, especially for an extended period, there's a good chance your physical health will be negatively affected.

You may be surprised just how interconnected the body and mind really are. Let's explore some proof of this, as well as discuss some ways to help yourself achieve a positive body and mind. (If you need immediate assistance with a matter pertaining to physical or mental health, call us now.)

Mental Health & Physical Health

Before we explore some specific ways [mental and physical health](#) are related, it's important to note some factors that play into them *being* related:

- Some people inherit genes that make them more susceptible to mental and/or physical illnesses.
- Those who live a sedentary or overall unhealthy lifestyle place themselves at higher risk than average for developing mental and/or physical conditions.
- Lack of motivation. Some people with pre-existing mental or physical conditions may find it rather difficult to find the motivation to change.

- Lack of resources. Many people seeking help for mental or physical issues struggle to find resources available and/or affordable to them.

Of course, there are countless other ways that can affect how much mental and physical health are interconnected. However, these four are major players in the game, especially genetics and lifestyle. The good news is that they're all factors that we have power over, even our genetics to a degree. Skip to the section below titled "How to Help Yourself" to read more.

4 Ways the Mind Affects the Body

Now for the specific. The following four physical areas of life are (among others) directly affected by your mentality. Please note: These are specific and common examples. The overall feeling of "blah" that comes with mental and/or physical conditions, words cannot explain. But there is always hope and there is always help. Call Defining Wellness today to connect with a professional. Here are some specific ways mental health affects physical health:

- Sleep & Energy Levels. Mental conditions such as anxiety, depression, bipolar, personality disorder, PTSD, etc. take a serious toll on the body. The combination of fatigue and stress from the condition can cause lack of sleep, which in turn can worsen the mental condition. In severe cases, this vicious cycle can lead to sleep disorders such as insomnia or sleep apnea.
- Digestive Health. Mental conditions have been proven to physically affect the digestive tract. Pain and/or discomfort in the stomach can result from mental stress/illness, and if stomach pain is already a symptom of someone with a mental disorder, the pain can worsen. Consider this. If we feel "butterflies" in our guts when we're nervous or excited, imagine the gut feelings that come with anxiety or depression. If you've been there, or are there, then you already know.
- Cardiac Health. They say stress causes a heavy heart. Unfortunately, there's science to back this. Heart-related factors associated with mental illness include but are not limited to high blood pressure, increased heart rate, palpitations, calcium build-up, and even heart attacks in some cases. The body releases hormones when stressed or under duress, and the heart feels it. Over time, the cardiac impact from mental disease can lead to heart disease.
- Consider all the aforementioned ways mental and physical health are related. It should come as no surprise then that poor mental health can actually take years off your life. Because mental health affects all systems of the body, including the immune system, one's lifespan can actually be reduced if left untreated.

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