MAX MIND

Fasting and Mental Health

Recent research has shown that fasting has profound effects on mental well-being. Beyond its role in weight management and physical health, fasting can improve mood, reduce stress, and enhance cognitive function.

One of the primary ways fasting benefits mental health is by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, both of which are associated with mood disorders such as anxiety and depression. Chronic inflammation has been linked to impaired brain function and increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases. By giving the digestive system a break, fasting allows the body to focus on cellular repair processes, reducing inflammation, and promoting overall brain health.

Fasting triggers the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein essential for brain function, learning, and memory. Low levels of BDNF

have been linked to depression and cognitive decline, while increased BDNF production can support mental resilience and emotional stability.

Fasting also plays a role in regulating key neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and dopamine, which influence mood, motivation, and emotional balance. By stabilizing these brain chemicals, fasting may help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression while promoting a sense of well-being.

Furthermore, intermittent fasting encourages the production of ketones, an alternative energy source for the brain. Ketones can enhance mental clarity, focus, and cognitive performance, which may explain why many people report feeling more alert and productive while fasting.

A study published in *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* highlights the connection between intermittent fasting and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. The research suggests that fasting can positively impact brain function by influencing stress responses, inflammation, and neurotransmitter levels (Fond et al., 2013). Another study suggests that fasting may also improve sleep quality, which is essential for mental health and emotional regulation.

Reference:

Fond, G., MacGregor, A., Leboyer, M., & Michalsen, A. (2013). Fasting in mood disorders: neurobiology and effectiveness. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 47*, 258-267.

Join us for Dr. Don's Fasting 301 Class on Monday, March 10th at 6:30 PM