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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is diet related to schizophrenia?

People with mental disorders may be at increased risk of nutritional deficiencies due to poor diet. Poor diet is a major and modifiable cause of comorbid conditions, including metabolic syndrome and obesity. During pregnancy, it also contributes to the risk of developmental problems in the foetus.

What is the evidence for diet in people with schizophrenia?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds poor dietary patterns in people with schizophrenia, including decreased fibre and fruit intake, and increased energy, sodium and saturated fat intake compared to people without a mental disorder. People with schizophrenia may have high LDL and low HDL blood levels, and increased fasting glucose.

Moderate to high quality evidence shows lower vitamin D levels compared to people without a mental disorder (large effect), and compared to people with other psychoses (small effect), with similar vitamin D levels compared to people with major depression.

Moderate quality evidence finds decreased folate levels, particularly in Caucasian and Asian people with schizophrenia, and in people with schizophrenia aged under 50 years. High quality evidence finds no differences in vitamin B12 levels in people with schizophrenia.

Moderate quality evidence shows people with first-episode psychosis also have a large effect of lower vitamin D levels, and a medium-sized effect of lower folate levels than people without a mental disorder. Moderate to low quality evidence also finds lower levels of vitamin C in people with first-episode psychosis, with no differences in B12, vitamin A, vitamin E, or any dietary mineral.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.