DEPRESSION

If you look for perfection, you’ll never be content.  —Leo Tolstoy

Signs and symptoms

• Depressed mood, diminished interest or loss of pleasure in activities
• Significant weight change or appetite disturbance
• Sleep disturbance
• Feelings of worthlessness
• Fatigue or loss of energy
• Psychomotor agitation or retardation
• Diminished ability to think or concentrate; indecisiveness
• Recurrent thoughts of death, or suicidal ideation without a specific plan

Resources

• The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (U.S.) Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
• Crisis Text Line – Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor
• Lifeline Crisis Chat: suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Strategies to improve depression

• Dietary intervention significantly lowers depression scores. Incorporate marine-based omega-3 fats. Strive for omega-3 index >8%. Avoid fast food, sugar and artificial sweeteners – which are linked to increased risk of depression. Normalize B vitamins (B1, B2, B3, B6, B9, B12).

• Normalize vitamin D levels - ideally by getting sensible sun exposure (optimal levels: 40-60 ng/ml or 100-150 nmol/L). Vitamin D is crucial to mental as well as overall well-being. Low levels predispose to depression. Add magnesium, which is needed for vitamin D metabolism.

• Incorporate light therapy by spending time outdoors in broad daylight.

• Incorporate exercise which is a powerful tool for the prevention and management of depression, in part by normalizing insulin resistance.