

2 November 2020

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister Hunt

How's Your Head Today? Campaign

Dietitians Australia would like to express our support for the Morrison Government's funding for the COVID-19 mental health campaign "How's Your Head Today?". This is a positive step in urging Australians to prioritise their mental health and we congratulate you on this initiative.

A good quality diet is fundamental to the prevention and treatment of mental health conditions. Dietitians Australia urges the government to include a strong focus on nutrition in the campaign, including recommendations to see an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) as part of prevention and treatment strategies. The link between a nutritious diet and good mental health is one that must not be overlooked.

There are many ways that the foods we eat affect how we feel, with a growing body of evidence highlighting how nutritious food choices can reduce symptoms of depression and rates of remission.(1) Making healthy food choices helps prevent and reduce the risk of developing lifestyle related chronic diseases commonly associated with mental ill-health. Engaging APDs in prevention and treatment of mental illness is a cost-effective solution for government and consumers.(2)

As the leading voice in nutrition, Dietitians Australia would like to offer support to the campaign and invite you to engage with us to help highlight the importance of nutrition in mental health.

Yours sincerely



Robert Hunt
Chief Executive Officer

References

1. Jacka, F.N., O'Neil, A., Opie, R. *et al.* A randomised controlled trial of dietary improvement for adults with major depression (the 'SMILES' trial). *BMC Med* 15, 23 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-017-0791-y>
2. Leonie Segal, Asterie Twizeyemariya, Dorota Zarnowiecki, Theo Niyonsenga, Svetlana Bogomolova, Amy Wilson, Kerin O'Dea & Natalie Parletta (2020) Cost effectiveness and cost-utility analysis of a group-based diet intervention for treating major depression – the HELFIMED trial, *Nutritional Neuroscience*, 23:10, 770-778, DOI: [10.1080/1028415X.2018.1556896](https://doi.org/10.1080/1028415X.2018.1556896)

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