**The Link Between Mental Health and Gut Health**

Did you know your gut health could be impacting your mental health?

Many people don’t realize that the health of their gut can impact so many other areas of the body. Scientists have already discovered a clear link between the gut and the brain, and research is continuously being carried out to see just how it does affect mental health.

Here, we’ll look at the link between mental health and gut health.

**Poor Gut Health Discovered To Increase Anxiety and Depression**

Research has revealed that the gut microbiota is capable of influencing your brain’s chemistry as well as its behavior. Those suffering from IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), for example, often suffer with anxiety and depression as well as digestive issues.

A study carried out on rats, also discovered that when male pups were separated from their mother, the stress they developed actually altered their microbiota. This, according to the researchers, increases the chances of them developing diseases later in life, along with depression.

The microbiota affects dopamine and serotonin levels. Although largely associated with the brain, it’s thought around 90% of serotonin is actually located within the gut. So, if you do have poor gut health, it can significantly affect your mental health too, increasing the risk of anxiety and depression.

**The Gut-brain Axis**

The reason your gut health affects your mental health is down to the gut-brain axis. This is a term used by experts to describe the two-way communication between the gut and the brain.

The gut sends neurotransmitters through the nerves and the immune system, up to the brain. Likewise, the brain also sends signals to the gut. That’s why you’ll often find if you become overly stressed or anxious, you’ll often feel sick too.

If the gut-brain axis is off-balance, it’s sure to affect both your gut and your mental health.

Could improving your gut health improve your mental health?

So, if gut health can contribute towards mental health, will improving it help? Absolutely! Though it is worth keeping in mind that any mental health issues you are experiencing may not be down to your gut alone.

It’s extremely important to seek advice from a doctor before attempting to improve your mental health by boosting your gut health. Depression and anxiety can be caused by a wide range of things and they could need treating with medication.

Overall, there is a definite link between gut health and mental health. However, you should be really careful before attempting to treat mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, through your gut. Always seek professional advice first.