

# TOTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



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Dr. Mia Holm obtained her PhD in Public Health with a specialization in Community Health Education. Prior to returning to HKAH — SR, Dr. Holm held teaching and management positions at the School of Public Health, HKU, and CUHK, respectively.



## Transforming Depression into Hope: *Embracing a New Chapter through Dietary and Lifestyle Adjustments*

Depression, or major depressive disorder, is a widespread condition that goes beyond normal emotional fluctuations, significantly affecting daily activities and overall well-being. Its exact cause remains unclear, but it is believed to involve a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors, including imbalances in brain chemicals such as serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine.

While medication and psychological therapy are common treatments for depression, making changes to one's diet and lifestyle can also play a significant role in prevention and management. By actively embracing these adjustments, individuals can discover a new opportunity for life and transform their depression into hope.

### Proactive Strategies for Preventing and Managing Depression:

#### A) Nourish your body with proper nutrition:

- **Complex carbohydrates:** Consuming carbohydrates influences the release of serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with mood regulation, through insulin secretion and the "plasma tryptophan ratio."
- **Protein (tryptophan):** Tryptophan, an essential amino acid, aids in the production of serotonin, which plays a crucial role in mood and sleep regulation.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** These nutrients impact the growth of new brain cells, cognitive function, and emotional well-being. Good sources include flaxseed oil, walnuts, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds.
- **B complex vitamins (B6, B12, folate):** These vitamins are involved in the synthesis and regulation of neurotransmitters that affect mood, depression, and anxiety.
- **Vitamin D:** Adequate levels of vitamin D are important for serotonin and melatonin regulation. Low vitamin D levels are often associated with depression.

- **Reduce processed foods:** Excessive consumption of processed foods can lead to gut inflammation, potentially increasing the risk of depression. Prioritizing fresh, whole foods is beneficial for mental and physical health.

#### B) Embrace a healthy lifestyle:

- **Exercise:** Regular physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, promoting a positive mood and overall well-being. Exercise also supports the growth of nerve cells in the brain.
- **Prioritize sleep:** Establishing a consistent sleep routine and practicing good sleep hygiene are vital for mental health. Disruptions in sleep patterns can weaken emotional resilience and increase the risk of depression.
- **Cultivate positive relationships:** Maintaining healthy connections with others combats loneliness, reduces stress, and contributes to happiness and overall mental well-being.
- **Avoid smoking and alcohol consumption:** Smoking affects dopamine levels and compounds associated with depressive symptoms. Alcohol, as a depressant, alters serotonin and other neurotransmitters, exacerbating anxiety and worsening depressive symptoms.
- **Manage stress:** Engaging in stress management techniques such as deep breathing, stretching, and pursuing enjoyable activities can significantly reduce the risk of developing depressive symptoms.

In conclusion, depression is a complex condition, and implementing changes in diet and lifestyle can have a profound impact on its prevention and management. By incorporating proper nutrition, reducing processed foods, engaging in regular exercise, prioritizing sleep, fostering positive relationships, avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption, and implementing effective stress management techniques, individuals can embark on a journey of hope and transform their lives.





# Healthy Miso Noodle Bowl

## Ingredients:

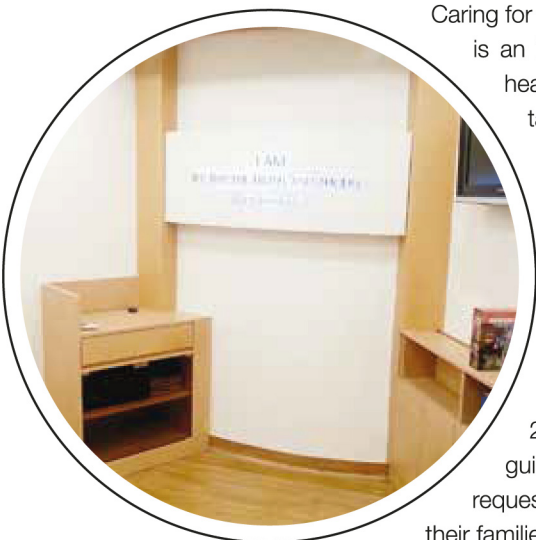
- 8 oz buckwheat noodles
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp white miso paste
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 cup sliced shiitake mushrooms
- 2 cups baby bok choy, chopped
- 1 cup shredded carrot
- 1 cup edamame, shelled
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds

## Instructions:

1. In a pot, bring the broth to a simmer. Whisk in the miso paste.
2. Add the noodles and cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. Stir in the mushrooms, bok choy, carrots, and edamame. Cook for 2-3 minutes more.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the sesame oil.
5. Divide the noodles and broth into bowls. Top with green onions, cilantro, and sesame seeds.

This vegan miso noodle bowl is a nutritious and satisfying meal. The buckwheat noodles provide fiber and B vitamins, while the vegetables offer a range of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Miso is a good source of probiotics, and the edamame adds plant-based protein. This dish is gluten-free, low in sodium, and promotes overall well-being.

## OUR *Prayer Room* AND *Worship* SERVICE



Caring for the whole person—body, mind and spirit — is an integral part of our hospital's approach to health care. Hong Kong Adventist Hospital takes every effort to look after your spiritual and emotional needs.

We have a prayer room which is located on the ground floor opposite to the entrance. It is opened to people of all faiths.

Our clinically trained chaplains are available 24-hours a day, seven days a week to offer guidance and counseling. For those who request, prayers are offered for the patients and their families.

Regardless of religious affiliation or the lack thereof, our chaplains are ready to offer spiritual and emotional support during your stay at the hospital.

A short inspiring morning message is offered every weekday from 8:40am to 9:00am in La Rue Building 7B. All patients are welcome to attend.

Please feel free to call upon our chaplains for emotional and spiritual support or to just have a listening ear.

May God bless you.

**From the Chaplain's Office**





# Depression and Spiritual Care

Depression and spiritual care have a complex and often overlooked relationship. While spiritual care isn't a replacement for traditional therapy or medication, it can be a valuable complement and source of support for those struggling with depression. Here's a look at how the two interact:

## How Depression Can Impact Spirituality:

- **Loss of Hope and Meaning:** Depression can make it difficult to see the point of life or find meaning in experiences, impacting spiritual connection.
- **Difficulty with Prayer or Meditation:** The inner turmoil of depression can make it challenging to focus and find solace in spiritual practices.
- **Guilt and Shame:** Depression can lead to feelings of being unworthy or unloved by a higher power, hindering spiritual growth.
- **Spiritual Disconnection:** Individuals may feel distant from their faith community or struggle to connect with their spiritual beliefs.

## How Spiritual Care Can Help with Depression:

- **Hope and Purpose:** Faith can offer a sense of purpose and hope for the future, providing a positive outlook even when facing difficult emotions.
- **Support and Community:** Faith communities offer a sense of belonging, fellowship, and a network of support that can be crucial in managing depression.
- **Forgiveness and Acceptance:** Spiritual practices like prayer and meditation can help individuals find peace with themselves and others, reducing the burden of guilt and shame.
- **Meaning and Transcendence:** Connecting with a higher power can provide a sense of meaning and transcendence, offering comfort and strength during difficult times.
- **Spiritual Practices:** Engaging in prayer, meditation, scripture study, or other spiritual activities can provide a sense of calm and peace, promoting emotional well-being.

## Ways to Incorporate Spiritual Care:

- **Seek Support from a Spiritual Leader:** Chaplains, pastors, or spiritual directors can offer guidance, support, and a listening ear.
- **Join a Faith Community:** Attending services, participating in small groups, or volunteering can provide a sense of belonging and purpose.
- **Engage in Personal Spiritual Practices:** Pray, meditate, read scriptures, or engage in other practices that resonate with your beliefs.
- **Seek Professional Spiritual Care:** Some therapists specialize in integrating spirituality into their approach to mental health treatment.

## Remember:

- **Individualized Approach:** The way spirituality manifests and its impact on depression varies widely among individuals. What works for one person may not work for another.
- **Respectful and Non-Judgmental Care:** Spiritual care should be offered with respect and compassion, without judgment or pressure.
- **Not a Substitute for Traditional Treatment:** Spiritual care should be considered a complementary approach to therapy and medication, not a replacement.

**If you are struggling with depression, please reach out to a healthcare professional or mental health specialist for diagnosis and treatment. Spiritual care can be a valuable tool in your recovery journey, but it's crucial to have professional support as well.**

## Reference

Peteet J. R. (2012). Spiritually integrated treatment of depression: a conceptual framework. *Depression research and treatment*, 2012, 124370.  
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**Lifestyle Management Center (LMC)** is a crucial component of Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, articulating its mission, aiming to provide health education to both our patients and the general public regarding the benefits of 'Total Health'.

Through services and programs such as the Lifestyle Medicine Clinic, comprehensive lifestyle assessment, health screenings, delicious vegan cooking demonstration, fitness club and interactive educational programs, participants can begin to restore their own health through lifestyle modification.

Our success depends largely on your participation and support. Let us strive together to promote better holistic health in our society.

## DONATE TODAY



Your benevolence not only makes a significant difference to our beneficiaries but also opens doors that they never imagined possible!

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.hkahf.org.hk](http://www.hkahf.org.hk)

## DONATE FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE



*Healthy Lifestyle Fund*

Your generosity will contribute to the healthy lifestyle education to the general public through Lifestyle Management Center. It will help our center run health seminars, cooking and fitness classes and health programs in order to educate the public on how to prevent, improve and even reverse chronic diseases.

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