

# Açaí and Depression



Hugo Rodier, M.D.

By the year 2020, DEPRESSION WILL BE THE SECOND MOST COMMON DIAGNOSIS FOR AMERICANS.

**Why?** Simply stated, we live very stressful lifestyles, we consume empty calories rich in refined sugars and fats and we are exposed to significant toxins in the environment from polluting technologies. All these problems have one thing in common: they result in our bodies having sub-optimal levels of micronutrients to maintain proper brain function (While it is true that many issues associated with depression are emotional, or spiritual, it is also true that there is no separation between our minds, bodies or brains. The work of Candace Pert and Linus Pauling has proven these concepts correct.)

The low level of micronutrients causes our cell membranes, particularly in the brain, to "TOIL"—becoming Toxic, Oxidized, Inflamed and Lacking in energy. Our "terrain" is then fertile ground for disease to take root. It turns out that depression, like all diseases, is associated with toiling. This leads to poor metabolism or poor energy processing in the brain, which cannot function properly.

The toiling of our brain cells is made worse by a distraught immune system, which is primarily found in tissues, such as the intestines. Poor diets compromise intestinal function, which has been linked to inflammatory changes in our brains. Furthermore, 95 percent of neurotransmitters, like serotonin, are found in the intestines. This is why the intestines are referred as the "second brain."

Consequently, improving our diets and our ability to detoxify and absorb nutrients from our intestines, can result in our immune systems working better, and thus reduce inflammation. Cell toiling is also reduced by diets high in antioxidants, thereby improving brain and intestinal function.



**Dr. Rodier** brings a unique perspective to traditional medicine through extensive research (surveying 150 medical journals each month), teaching (University of Utah, School of Medicine, College of Health, and Department of Nutrition), and active clinical practice (working with a variety of chronic conditions).

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## Açaí Fruit

*The açaí fruit (pronounced AH-sigh-EE) has a long history of use in South America. The purple, berry-like fruit roughly the size of a small grape, grows on palm trees common to the Amazon and other areas of South America. Locals have used all parts of the palm for hundreds of years. Researchers noted that the fruit was very sought after by both young and old and of all economic classes for its strength and energy promoting properties.*

*The berry provides a remarkable source of healthy fats, complete protein and essential vitamins and minerals. The açaí may also offer substantial protection against free radical damage. The fruit offers an excellent array of phytonutrients to protect against free radical damage, slow aging, fight disease and promote optimal health. Açaí can make a significant difference in overall health and quality of life.*

The action of the antioxidants and micronutrients in the açaí berry help to heal toiling cell membranes and improve our cell communication and metabolism—which leads to better brain and intestinal health. The açaí berry improves the Nitric Oxide Synthase pathway of inflammation, making the toiling cell membranes throughout our bodies, especially our brains and intestines, less inflamed and oxidized. All the nutrients in açaí heal metabolism in cells, thus increasing the energy available for these cells to carry out their function. The cells in our brains are then better equipped to function, produce energy and communicate via neurotransmitters, like serotonin.

Açaí micronutrients also improve detoxification pathways, thus eliminating xenobiotics that have been associated with depression and poor brain function. Heavy metals like mercury, air pollution, chemicals, pesticides, radiation, etc., are causing significant toiling in our brain cells.

Açaí berry nutrients also improve our immune system, thereby minimizing the damage that could occur to brain cell membranes. By healing our intestines, improving micronutrient absorption and healing the detoxification pathways of the liver and intestines, we end up detoxifying these foreign toxins and improve our chances of healing cell membranes. Açaí can assist you in doing so, thereby improving your chances of maintaining brain health.

The high content of omega oils, vitamin B and amino acids in the açaí berry help produce better neurotransmitters, thus improving brain cell communication and reducing the chances of mental dysfunction. Of course, many emotional and mental issues need to be addressed with proper counseling and perhaps more importantly, by healing strained relationships and forgiving those who may have offended us.

**The Bottom Line:** *Açaí may reduce the risk of mental and brain dysfunction by providing the micronutrients and antioxidants that our brains need for better health. The premise of the landmark work by Linus Pauling, "Orthomolecular Psychiatry," is good nutrition is indispensable to maintain proper cognitive brain function, and thus minimize our risk of emotional problems.*

## Serving Recommendation

Açaí is a superfood. It is not to be taken in "doses," as you would a drug. Like any food, you may enjoy it as much as you like, in servings that you tolerate. Consume the açaí juice on an empty stomach, or at least a few minutes before consuming solid foods.

As a general rule, the more nutrition one needs, the more one should consume a food such as the açaí berry. The açaí berry in particular, will avail you of higher micronutrients to promote healing and optimize arterial health. A good starting point is to drink between two and four ounces a day.

## Açaí in the News

Nicholas Perricone, M.D. said, "[The açaí] berry is one of the most nutritious and powerful foods in the world...nature's perfect energy fruit!" This fruit has been discussed on Oprah, NBC's Today Show, and on Steve O'Brien's CBS-FM New York radio show. In addition to its inclusion in several nutritional supplements, the little fruit from the Amazon has even made its way into a fruit smoothie available from the popular national chain, Jamba Juice.