Healthy body healthy mind – Part 4 Hormones

Are you getting your daily DOSE?

If you want to stay committed, confident and in control of challenging situations, getting your daily dose of positive hormones can help

While it is difficult to identify what exactly is responsible for your sense of happiness, four chemicals seem to play a significant role: Dopamine, Oxytocin Serotonin and Endorphins.

Even if only one of them (oxytocin) is technically a hormone, these are often considered the hormones of happiness.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter (chemical messenger) that it helps the brain to send messages to different parts of the body; not only does it play an essential part in physical movement, is also very important to general well-being. It helps to feel pleasure, when you eat something you like or listen to your favourite music. You can increase dopamine levels by getting enough sleep (see my article on sleep here), eating well and exercising (see my article on exercise here).

Oxytocin is a hormone that is produced in the hypothalamus (the brains "command centre") and is released into the blood through the pituitary gland and other parts of the brain; it binds to oxytocin receptors, impacting on behaviour, and physiology. You can increase its level by taking part in group activities and doing something for others

Serotonin, like dopamine, is a neurotransmitter. It helps to regulate sleep, appetite, and mood. It also helps to inhibit pain. Research has shown that low serotonin activity can be linked to depression and an increased risk of suicide. Serotonin is one of the main chemicals responsible for stabilizing our feelings of well-being and happiness; you can increase its levels by performing aerobic exercises and by having happy thoughts.

Endorphins are chemicals that help to cope with stress and pain and play an important part in well-being. Endorphins trigger positive feelings and are released whenever you do something you enjoy; you can increase their level by listening to your favourite music, eating sweets (in moderation) and laughing.

Clearly, we are all different; with different sleep patterns, different physical needs, different emotional needs and different mental needs. However, a simple daily routine including a brisk walk, listening to music, thinking about great times and doing something useful for others can work wonders!!