

Cultural Daily

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Dopamine Menu: Its Importance

Our Friends · Monday, September 23rd, 2024

Dopamine menus are the newest trend that has taken over TikTok! On the Clock app they're created by Jessica McCabe (How to ADHD) which she uses to help cope with ADHD. This is a different kind of menu—far more distinct than usual.

If you're ever curious why a dopamine menu can be beneficial and essential, especially for those with ADHD, read more to learn more! If you don't have ADHD, the dopamine menu might even be of great help to you.

Reward Pathway for the Brain

The brain thrives on more than simple [online Jili games](#); instead, there's science to it! The pathway in the brain's reward system comes from the ventral tegmental area (VTA) and goes through the nucleus accumbens, where dopamine is released. Many have theorized that sex, eating, socializing, and other similar activities cause the VTA to have activity, which results in a boost of dopamine levels in the brain.

Many activities can result in dopamine release. You may notice that these are usually activities included on dopamine menus, like playing a board game or puzzle, visiting family and friends, listening to a favorite song, cooking, baking, having a snack, and trying something new.

However, the amount of dopamine is determined by the activity. Running has a low dopamine sustenance for several hours, while a sugary drink has a high but short-term dopamine increase. The frequency of our activities can be critical and potentially work against us.

ADHD and Dopamine Menu

One popular hypothesis for ADHD is that a dysregulated dopamine system causes it. The brain's levels are from the tonic and phasic stages of dopamine release. The tonic dopamine is the precedent level; the resting dopamine neurons produce this. However, these are affected by the activities that we undertake.

Moreover, the brain's dopamine levels are subjected to a negative feedback mechanism. Ergo, if the baseline levels are low, then the phasic bursts are higher—this shows an indirect relationship.

In contrast, when the baseline levels of dopamine become higher, the phasic release is lower. Take note: higher baseline levels mean a lot of negative feedback.

Those who have ADHD may experience low levels of dopamine; this results in them continuously seeking ephemeral bursts of phasic dopamine and feeling more rewarded. As a result, drugs like methylphenidate (Ritalin), which helps boost background levels of dopamine, may work for those who have ADHD.

On a dopamine menu, you may want to include activities that provide sustained, low-level release of dopamine, such as socializing, listening to music, and engaging in physical activity.

Mental Health

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter and is called the “pleasure chemical.” However, it does help reinforce feelings of pleasure by linking similar sensations to behaviors and is comprised of the reward center. When we feel good about our current activities, we want to do more of this activity. As a result, there’s a lot more dopamine production going on.

Encourages Mindfulness

Lastly, the dopamine menu is an excellent way to practice mindfulness. This means enjoying and focusing on things as they are in the moment.

Wrapping Up

The dopamine menu is a helpful tool that can benefit not only those with ADHD but also regular people. Most of all, it is crucial because people must find ways to draw simple joys out of life – and enjoy the small things there are.

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