

SUPPLEMENTS FOR DEPRESSION

(taken from *Prescription for Nutritional Healing* by Balch & Balch)

Supplement	Suggested Dosage	Comments	Dietary Sources
Essential fatty acids (EPA fish oil, flaxseed oil, primrose oil are good sources)	As directed on labels - take with meals	Aid in transmission of nerve impulses; needed for normal brain function.	Salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, white fish, flaxseeds.
Vitamin B complex			
plus extra pantothenic acid (vitamin B5)	500 mg daily	B complex vitamins are necessary for normal functioning of the brain and nervous system. The most potent anti-stress vitamin.	Beef, brewers yeast, eggs, fresh vegetables, legumes, liver, nuts, whole rye & wheat.
and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine)	50 mg 3 times daily	Needed for normal brain function. May help lift depression.	Carrots, chicken, eggs, fish, meat, peas, spinach, sunflower seeds, walnuts, wheat germ.
plus vitamin B3 (niacin)	50 mg 3 times daily. Do not exceed this amount from all sources.	Improves cerebral circulation. <i>Caution:</i> Do not take niacin if you have a liver disorder, gout, or high blood pressure.	Beef liver, brewers yeast, broccoli, carrots, cheese, corn flour, dates, eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, pork, potatoes, tomatoes, whole wheat.
plus vitamin B12 and folic acid	1000 – 2000 mcg. daily 400 mcg daily.	Linked to production of neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Found to be deficient in people with depression.	Brewers yeast, eggs, kidney, liver, milk, milk products, seafood. Asparagus, bran, brewers yeast brown rice, cheese, chicken, dates, green leafy and root vegetables, legumes, milk, meat, whole grains.
Zinc	50 mg daily. Do not exceed total of 100 mg daily from all supplements.	Found to be deficient in people with depression. Zinc gluconate lozenges are good for absorption.	Brewers yeast, egg yolks, fish, legumes, liver, meats, mushrooms, pecans, poultry, soybeans, pumpkin & sunflower seed, whole grains.
Calcium and Magnesium	1500 – 2000 mg daily. 1000 mg daily.	Has calming effect. Needed for the nervous system. Works with calcium. Deficiencies can contribute to insomnia.	Dairy, seafood, soy, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, brewers yeast.
Vitamin C with Bioflavonoids	2000 – 5000 mg daily in divided doses.	Needed for immune function. Aids in preventing depression.	Dairy, fish, meat, apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, brown rice, nuts, grapefruit, lemons, whole grain Berries, citrus fruit, onions, green vegetables, strawberries, tomatoes.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Eat a diet that includes plenty of raw fruits & vegetables, with soybeans and soy products, whole grains, seeds, nuts, brown rice, millet, and legumes. A diet too low in complex carbohydrates can cause serotonin depletion and depression.
- If you are nervous and wish to become more relaxed, eat more complex carbohydrates. For increased alertness, eat protein meals containing essential fatty acids. If you need your spirits lifted, eat foods like turkey and salmon which are high in tryptophan and protein.
- Experiment with eliminating wheat products from your diet — wheat gluten has been linked to depressive disorders.
- Avoid diet sodas and other products containing the artificial sweetener aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal). This additive can block the formation of serotonin and cause headaches, insomnia, and depression in individuals who are already serotonin-deprived.
- Limit your intake of supplements that contain the amino acid phenylalanine. It contains the chemical phenol which is highly allergenic/causes sensitivities. Most depressed people are sensitive to certain substances. If you take a combination free-form amino acid supplement, look for a product that does not contain phenylalanine. Phenylalanine is one of the major components of aspartame.
- Avoid foods high in saturated fats; the consumption of meat or fried foods, such as hamburgers & French fries, leads to sluggishness, slow thinking, and fatigue.
- Avoid all forms of sugar, including normally "good" sweeteners such as honey, molasses, and fruit juice. The body reacts more quickly to the presence of sugar than it does to the presence of complex carbohydrates. The increase in energy supplied by the simple carbohydrates (sugars) is quickly followed by fatigue and depression. Stevia, a concentrated natural sweetener derived from a South American shrub, does not have the same effect on the body as sugar, and is not yet known to have the side effects of artificial sugar substitutes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and processed foods.
- People who smoke are more likely than non-smokers to be depressed. Nicotine is known to temporarily elevate dopamine and norepinephrine, thus making it hard to cope when stopping smoking.
- Allergies, hypoglycemia, hypothyroidism, and/or malabsorption problems can cause or contribute to depression. In people with these conditions, vitamin B12 and folic acid are blocked from entering the system, which can lead to depression. This is why sublingual forms of the B complex vitamins can be useful for persons with malabsorption problems as they age.
- Individuals with depression are more likely than other people to have various disturbances in calcium metabolism.
- Vigorous exercise can be an effective antidote to bouts of depression. During exercise, the brain produces pain-killing chemicals called endorphins and enkephalins. Certain endorphins and other brain chemicals released in response to exercise also produce a natural "high." Most who exercise regularly say they feel really good afterward. This may explain why exercise is so helpful in alleviating depression.