Alleviate Depression Naturally

Depression. You'd think we all have the same definition for this word, but we don't. Misery, the blues… Many people think a sad emotional state is equivalent to clinical depression. It is not.

To meet the diagnosis of a depressive episode the following criteria listed in the DSM-V must be met:

Five (or more) of the following symptoms have been present during the same 2-week period and represent a change from previous functioning; at least one of the symptoms is either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure. Note: Do not include symptoms that are clearly due to a general medical condition, or mood-incongruent delusions or hallucinations.

1. Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day, as indicated by either subjective report (e.g., feels sad or empty) or observation made by others (e.g., appears tearful). Note: In children and adolescents, can be irritable mood.
2. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day (as indicated by either subjective account or observation made by others).
3. Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain (e.g., a change of more than 5 percent of body weight in a month), or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day. Note: In children, consider failure to make expected weight gains.
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia nearly every day.
5. Psychomotor agitation or retardation nearly every day (observable by others, not merely subjective feelings of

restlessness or being slowed down).
6. Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
7. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (which may be delusional) nearly every day (not merely self-reproach or guilt about being sick).
8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day (either by subjective account or as observed by others).
9. Recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying), recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide.
10. The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.
11. The symptoms are not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication) or a general medical condition (e.g., hypothyroidism).

All, or nearly all, of the symptoms people experience during depression or any other mental disorder, are symptoms every person experiences at one time or another. The difference between normal experience and a disorder is the constancy, severity, and combination of symptoms.

Normal experience does not include two straight weeks of sadness so intense it results in an inability to function at work while it is impossible to sleep (or to get out of bed). In addition there is a sudden dramatic loss of weight, movements become slow and deliberate, and thoughts of death or suicide crowd out every thought not associated with self-loathing. (This is an example of five symptoms from the list).

Depression is associated with low serotonin levels and high cortisol levels. Serotonin is known as the feel-good neurotransmitter while cortisol is a hormone known as the stress hormone.

Conventional Treatment for Depression

Since depressed feeling and depression are not always one in the same, what we call depression can be viewed on a continuum. Severe symptoms meeting the criteria for clinical depression would be on one end of that scale while sadness or the blues while general dissatisfaction with life would be at the other. And yet, regardless of where a person is on that scale, there is a high probability that a doctor will prescribe anti-depressants if the patient requests them. Hopefully, psychiatrists would not be as quick to prescribe them.

Generally, any good doctor will at least mention eating a healthy diet, getting exercise, and sleeping 8 hours a night. But too often that prescription pad is pulled out to "help." Anti-depressants, taken to decrease suicidal thoughts and feelings, can increase suicidal and homicidal thinking and have been linked to both suicides and to most of the mass murder incidents that have occurred in the last few decades.

Alternative Treatment for Depression

As with all aspects of physical and mental health, healing begins with a truly healthy, nutrition-packed diet and exercise.

Diet

A truly healthy diet consists of 80% fresh, raw, organic produce, more vegetables than fruit, a wide variety of foods, healthy fats, and pure water. (Check out the *80% Raw Food Diet* for more information).

When any body system is not working properly, increase nutrition and detox. A great way to increase nutrition is to add nutritional powder to your daily routine in juice or a smoothie. To learn how to make your own Total Nutrition Powder, check out *Total Nutrition, Make Your Own Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*.

More of Shillington's Recipes:

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When you are eating an organic 80% raw diet that includes plenty of clean water, and foods like onions, garlic, turmeric, and cilantro, you are detoxing on an ongoing basis. But a thorough bi-annual detox is extremely beneficial.

Eating right is more than adding the right foods to your diet. It is just as important, if not more important, to remove the food from your diet that you *should not eat*. Avoid all artificial flavors, colors, and preservatives, MSG, trans fats, and GMOs. Do not eat corn syrup. Unless it is organic, it's genetically modified. Avoid or seriously restrict caffeine. Avoid sugar. Conventional sugar has no nutritive value. It harms the body and the immune system in a number of ways and chances are it is genetically modified, as most of the conventional sugar made nowadays comes from sugar beets, a crop that is generally GMO. The easiest way to deal with all of the issues of what *not* to eat is to eat real food, whole food, and avoid processed packaged foods.

By eating a truly healthy diet, you will be well on your way toward healing your gut. If you have an overgrowth of Candida you will benefit from supplementation and some additional dietary additions and restrictions until you have that overgrowth in check.

Gut health is vital in alleviating depression because the beneficial bacteria in the gut manufacture 80% of our serotonin. When the gut is out of balance due to Candida,

parasites, and bad bacteria, serotonin levels suffer, as does the body's entire hormonal system.

To learn more about how to heal the gut, read *How To Kill Candida and Balance Your Inner Ecosystem*.

Exercise

Exercise is essential for several reasons. First, exercise produces endorphins that elevate your mood. Studies comparing exercise to pharmaceuticals have proven that exercise is more beneficial than drugs.

Exercise improves overall health by moving blood and lymph throughout the tissues. This process helps bring nutrients into individual cells while removing waste from the body. The immune system is strengthened and the body and its organs, including the brain, receive the cleansing and the nourishment needed to attain peak performance.

Vitamin D

The link between vitamin D deficiency and depression is well documented and even carries its own diagnosis- Seasonal Affective Disorder. Unless you live in the lower portion of the U.S. (draw a line from Los Angeles, CA to Atlanta, GA to mark the line), chances are you do not get enough sun to make adequate amounts of vitamin D. Vitamin D supplementation should always be considered as a first line of defense when symptoms of depression are present. To learn more about Vitamin D, read Sunlight and Vitamin D.

B Vitamins

B vitamins are best taken together in the form of B complex vitamins. Never take just one B vitamin alone for any length of time.

B vitamins are essential for many functions in the body.

Deficiencies in B5, B6, B7, or B12 cause depression. Daily supplementation will elevate mood, decrease irritability, and improve sleep. To learn more about B vitamins read *Mental Health, Physical Health & B Vitamins – Nature's Valium*.

Conclusion

With the right diet, exercise, detoxification, and supplementation, the body is given the resources to heal itself. If loss, abuse, or other life events are contributing to sadness, low self-esteem, or other symptoms, therapy can be an invaluable aid in healing.

Recommended Supplements:

- B Vitamins
- Probiotics
- Vitamin D
- Healthy Fats

Further Reading:

- *How Candida Leads to Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, and Other Mental Disorders*
- *How I Overcame Depression Naturally*
- *Natural Remedies for Depression*