These 4 Types of Vitamins and Supplements May Help Your Depression Treatment

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Best Vitamins for Depression

There are many different forms of therapy open to those with depression, and some may be as simple as taking a vitamin supplement. Although no vitamin is powerful enough to alleviate all your symptoms, vitamins can be a viable addition to your treatment plan. Let's explore some of the best vitamins for depression treatment.

Vitamin Deficiencies and Developing Depression

If you are hesitant to try anti-depressants or are looking for a possible alternative, there are certain nutritional deficiencies that may cause depression symptoms. If you are interested in testing your nutrition levels to see where you may be lacking, ask your doctor or general practitioner how to get tested.

There are **10 nutritional deficiencies** in particular that may lead to depression:

- 1. Amino Acids
- 2. Folate
- 3. Iodine
- 4. Iron
- 5. Magnesium
- 6. Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- 7. Selenium
- 8. Vitamin B Complex
- 9. Vitamin D
- 10. Zinc

In most cases, your body does not produce enough of these nutrients on its own and therefore, we are dependent on the foods that we eat to provide these vitamins and minerals. However, for most people, the required daily intake for the average adult is too high to be able to get these nutrients from our diet alone.

Testing your nutrition levels is a great way to start on your supplement journey; you can pinpoint exactly where you may be lacking.

Is Your Depression Really Being Caused by Nutritional Deficiencies?

Be sure to consult with your doctor to determine if your symptoms of depression may be linked to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Taking supplements is not guaranteed to alleviate your symptoms, and for some people, other treatment may be required.

The Benefits of Vitamins for Depression

Supplements are a great way to ensure you are getting all the vitamins and minerals you need on a daily basis, while also curbing any potential symptoms of depression that may develop as a result of deficiencies.

There are many people who have found relief from their depression by taking vitamins and supplements, and in many cases, they are much more affordable, and potentially safer than prescription drugs.

Regardless of your nutrition levels, the vitamins, supplements and herbs listed below have been recognized as alternative remedies in the treatment of depression.

1. St. John's Wort (hypericum perforatum)

This herb has been used throughout Europe as a depression treatment for decades. Though evidence is not conclusive, in some studies, it has been proven to be similarly effective as anti-depressants for mild cases of depression, with fewer side effects.

2. Vitamin B

Vitamin B is naturally occurring in foods like dairy, meat, eggs and fish, but if you are a vegetarian, vegan or avoid any of these foods, you may need a vitamin B supplement to get the dosage you require.

3. Vitamin D

Your body can make its own vitamin D through exposure to the sun, but if you are often stuck indoors for work, or need to avoid sunlight for some other reason, taking a supplement can assist in getting the appropriate amount of vitamin D in your system.

4. Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are found naturally in many foods, including fish and nuts. However, depending on your diet and any allergies you may have, it could be difficult to get the required daily dose through your food alone.

How Safe and Effective Are Vitamins?

There are plenty of vitamins and minerals that have been studied for their ability to alleviate the symptoms of depression. Those mentioned above are in no way an exhaustive list.

For the most part, vitamins and other supplements offer a cost-effective option for those who are interested in treating their depression with fewer side effects than prescription medications and anti-depressants.

Always speak to your doctor before taking any supplements, especially if you are already taking prescription drugs and any other medications. Although most vitamins are safe to take, there are many that can interfere and have reactions with other medications.

How to Include Vitamins in Your Life

As vitamins are considered a form of alternative medicine or complementary medicine, there are not as many studies done on them as typical anti-depressants. Therefore, the integration of vitamins into your treatment plan might feel like a lot of trial and error.

Thankfully, there are very few (if any) side effects to trying vitamins, so you can ditch them as soon as you find they are not helping you. Your doctor can help you determine which vitamins or supplements to try first, as well as the correct dosages for each.

What Is Complementary or Supportive Medicine?

Complementary medicine is classified as any treatment options that are alternative to traditional Western medical practice. As such, complementary or supportive medicine covers a wide array of potential treatment options. These alternative and holistic approaches to treatment can often be used alongside to “complement” traditional medicine.

Integrative therapy aims to use a variety of disciplines in the treatment of depression, including diet, exercise and mental conditioning, as well as lifestyle changes. There is evidence to suggest that some of these holistic treatment options do work, allowing people yet another option to explore in their treatment journey.

What About Traditionally Prescribed Medications?

Vitamins and herbal remedies are considered complementary or supportive medicine in the treatment of depression, as they are not included within the list of anti-depressant classifications often prescribed by Western doctors.

Medications that are commonly prescribed for the treatment of depression in Western medicine are classified as follows:

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI)
- Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRI)
- Tricyclic and Tetracyclic Antidepressants
- Atypical Antidepressants
- Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)
- N-methyl D-aspartate (NMDA) Antagonist
- Neuroactive Steroid Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA)-A Receptor Positive Modulator

If you are interested in potentially trying a natural or herbal remedy in the management of your depression, talk to your doctor first. If you are on any of the medications listed above, its function may be drastically affected by the addition of vitamins or other complementary medicines.

How to Approach Depression Treatment

No matter what you are doing to manage the symptoms of your depression, it is important that you are in constant communication with your doctor or general practitioner. Trying therapies on your own without oversight by a medical professional can be dangerous.

Some herbal remedies or vitamins can have an adverse reaction with certain prescribed anti-depressants, so be sure to run by any new ideas you may have past your doctor before implementing them into your treatment program. Your doctor will know which medications may counteract and will be able to offer guidance on the safest way to proceed.

As with most mental health treatment options, there may be some trial and error when first exploring vitamins and supplements, but their inclusion into your life may improve the state of both your body and your mind.