

# Supplements

Supplements are a great way to ensure we get all of the necessary nutrients. However, it is also important get our nutrients from food.

## Omega 3's

The brain has higher levels of Omega 3's than any other area of the body. Some studies show that the use of Omega 3's can help in the management of depression. Found in cold water fish like salmon and mackerel.

## Folic Acid and B12

Low levels of these vitamins can contribute to depression. Folic acid can be found in peanuts, peas, soybeans, oatmeal, broccoli, kale and cauliflower. Look for B12 in kale, spinach, legumes, asparagus, broccoli, and cabbage.

## Calcium

This nutrient can be helpful in the management of mood concentration and behavior for people who suffer from PMS. Found in dairy products, but also green vegetables like kale and spinach.

## Vitamin D

In recent studies it is thought that Vitamin D may help improve mood disorders as it is a precursor to serotonin. Our bodies produce vitamin D when we sit in the sun for 15min a day. This could also alleviate the effects of SAD or "Seasonal Affective Disorder".



## Sources:

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# Depression and HIV



## Managing Depression:

## The Role of Nutrition and Lifestyle

GMHC

In any 1-year period it is estimated that 9.5 percent of the US adult population (about 20.9 million) suffer from a depressive illness. Depression not only effects your daily life, but your nutrition and overall wellbeing.

There are many causes of depression. It is important to have a conversation with your health care provider to determine what is the cause of your depression.

Some causes include:

- Genetics
- Environment
- Sleep disturbances
- Stress
- Hypoglycemia\*
- Hypothyroid\*
- Food Allergies
- Chronic Disease\*
- PMS, Menopause
- Medications\*



## Lifestyle

There are things that we do every day that effect our moods. Here are some ways to improve your lifestyle.

## Physical Activity

Activity is a great stress reliever! When we increase our heart rate our bodies produce chemicals that improve how our brain cells communicate with each other. Activity also increases our energy and improves sleep patterns.

Try jogging or walking at a brisk pace for 30 minutes most days of the week. Start slow and build your endurance until you can sustain your activity.

## Smoking/Caffeine

Many times smoking co-exists with depression. Smoking negatively impacts our health in many ways, but it also contributes to how we feel. Caffeine, in unhealthy quantities, also effects mood. Both nicotine and caffeine are addictive substances and should be used cautiously or eliminated.

\*Always talk to your doctor before changing any aspect of your medication regimen. Never stop taking a medication prescribed by your MD.

## Your Nutrition

If you eat well you are more likely to live well. Balanced eating can help you feel energized, alert, and maintains a health body weight. Depression can cause weight loss or weight gain.

If you lose your appetite as a result of depression an appetite stimulant may help. Try to eat small frequent meals, and focus on nutrient dense foods.

Similarly, being overweight can contribute depression. Excess weight can effect bone, joint pain, and shortness of breath. This effects ones ability to participate in many enjoyable activities.

Obesity also increases our risk for diabetes. Some studies show that people who have diabetes are at an increased risk of depression.

Keep a food journal. This can help decipher what you are eating and what your triggers to eat or not eat may be. Scheduling regular meal times can help you keep track of how much you are actually eating. A cookie here and small snack there can add up! Try to eat something every 4-5 hours so that blood sugars do not drop too low.

The more care and thought you put into meal preparation the more you may enjoy meal time. Take time to eat. Avoid salty seasonings and fried foods. These food can bog you down, and contribute to weight gain.

## Foods to focus on:

- Whole Grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Fresh fish
- Protein



Make sure that you drink plenty of water!

## Alcohol

While the short term effects may seem to be a stress reliever, in actuality alcohol is a depressant. It also impairs judgment and can contribute to poor decision making.