



Emerald
Health and Education
Foundation

Health Awareness
Disease Prevention

‘It’s a helicopter over the river—someone jumped!.’ Depression is not only a big problem, it can be fatal. With the dark days of winter upon us—both seasonally and economically, depression is a condition that many are currently dealing with, and many more will be dealing with it in the future.

We continue to stress that as human beings we are complex and integrated. While often we try to compartmentalize our lives and health, in reality all aspects impact and affect the others. As with so many other issues that impact our health and well-being, depression results from a combination of factors—some in our control, some not. While there are organic and genetic factors involved, lifestyle habits can play a huge part as well. One expert in this field suggests that the combination of any four of ten factors will result in depression. These ten factors are:

- ☞ **Genetic makeup** ☞ **Toxic Exposure**
- ☞ **Developmental Experience** ☞ **Addiction**
- ☞ **Lifestyle Habits** ☞ **Social Circumstances**
- ☞ **Circadian Rhythms** ☞ **Medical Problems**
- ☞ **Nutrition** ☞ **Frontal Lobe Brain Function**

Neal Nedley, MD: ‘Depressioin the Way Out’ 2001

While we cannot control things like our genetic makeup or our past developmental experience, there are many things that we can change and control, which is good news! While modern medication may treat the symptoms and help balance our brain chemistry, getting to the root of the problem can also help bring lifelong freedom from this dark malady. Focusing on the things we can change rather than the things we cannot will make a big difference in our lives!

Several things that aggravate depression are: Inadequate rest; improper nutrition; lack of exercise and fresh air; inadequate exposure to sunlight; dehydration; alcohol, caffeine and various other drugs; long term exposure to, and improperly dealing with, stress; head injury; marriage and family problems; violent and emotionally charged media; environmental or occupational toxic exposure.

What we choose to put into our brain and body does make a difference. Inadequate amounts of certain nutrients will greatly affect our mood and attitudes, and it has been shown that among teenagers that listen to heavy metal music there is a marked increase in the contemplation of suicide. In general, ‘healthy food, better mood’ and ‘garbage in, garbage out’ are good basic rules for understanding the interactions between what goes into our lives and how we feel and relate.

If you or someone you know are suffering from the darkness of depression, get help! It is important to have good medical help with this condition, as it will not go away on its own. With that said, there are a number of general things that each of us can do to safeguard ourselves and help fight off depression:

www.emeraldhef-ie.org
051 831100

Fight Depression!

1--Use More Plant Based Foods

Unrefined grains, fruits, vegetables and nuts and seeds are packed with many nutritive elements that help our bodies run well, fight disease and feel good. Our brain needs the best nutrition to view life from the right side up. Plant based foods are filled with important phytochemicals that can not be gotten anyplace else.

2--Get Aerobic Exercise

Preferably outside, but if indoors install full spectrum lighting. This simulated daylight is a good idea even for the sitting room, kitchen or office. Full spectrum lighting is used as a treatment for depression and has a big affect on the mind and body. Many suffer from SAD, Seasonal Affective Disorder--depression due to lack of sunshine.

3--Drink 5 to 7 Glasses Of Water A Day

Our bodies are about 70% water. Dehydration makes a person’s body and mind feel terrible and decreases our ability to function at our best!

4--Get 8 Hours Of Sleep Each Night

A couple of hours of sleep before midnight interacts with the natural circadian rythms of our body in a positive way.

5--Protect Your Head From Injury

Our brain controls everything else and an injured brain impacts all aspects of our feeling and behaviour.

6--Fill Your Mind With Good Things

Filling your mind and life with interesting, meaningful, positive and uplifting things makes a big difference in the mental attitude. At the same time, challange and discard negative, gloomy thoughts and behaviours.

7--Avoid Addicting Substances

Alcohol and other drugs always feed depression and are bad for the health in general. Look for better craic!

8--Pray

There is a God who cares for you and will help with your problems if you but ask!