

**“Every day is a second chance.”**  
– Anonymous

I needed this quote. Some days are just tough. One thing piles onto another....and another...and we're okay...until we're not. Sometimes, it's the smallest of things that pushes us over the edge and leads us down a dark path in which we don't see any light. But if we look long enough and hard enough, we'll see there is light at the end of the tunnel. I was moved this month to write about depression. It's a condition that affects over 16 million people per year in the U.S. People think depression is sadness, crying, perhaps even dressing in all black. But those people are wrong. Depression is the constant feeling of being numb.....to emotions and to life. Depression is feeling like you've lost something, but having no clue of what it was or where you lost it. Then one day you wake up and realize what you've lost is yourself. I think most of us have been there and for most, it's just a short-term problem. But for others, it's more permanent and they embark on a downward spiral that appears to have no stopping point. It's really hard to explain to people who've never known serious depression the continuous intensity of it and how much it emotionally hurts. All those suffering from it know is they want that pain to end and will often do anything to make it stop. The most important thing to remember, if ever you're feeling depressed, is that you're not alone and things WILL get better. It's usually just a temporary feeling that will eventually pass. Even Scarlett O'Hara said at the end of *Gone with the Wind*: “*Tomorrow is another day.*” Things will always look better and brighter with the dawning of a new day. It truly is a second chance.

Yours in health,  
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### **Foods to Help with Depression**



This is a topic near and dear to my heart for multiple reasons. Those of you who are closest to me know about at least a few of them. It's an uncomfortable topic, but certainly an important one. Most people, at some point in their lives, suffer an occasional bout of “the blues,” which typically disappears almost as quickly as it appears. But unfortunately, there are many people who suffer severe depression and think the only answers are either taking medication or finding a way to make the pain stop, with tragic consequences. This is a serious subject that deserves serious attention.

Let me first say that if you feel really depressed or have suicidal thoughts, please seek professional help immediately.

Unfortunately, depression has a pretty negative stigma...and it shouldn't. There are many factors in your life that can contribute to your risk of it. Perhaps you're just genetically predisposed. Perhaps you've experienced some tragic loss in your life, which leads you to a negative place. Or maybe you just suffer from seasonal affective disorder, more commonly known as SAD, which pops up in the winter months, when the days are shorter. SAD typically dissipates with longer days and warmer weather. Keep in mind that whatever you're feeling, no matter what the cause, there IS hope.

I've been there and I'll just leave it at that. Fortunately, I was able to escape the darkness and get back to the light. But that doesn't mean I'll always stay there. It's a constant battle to keep from going to dark places. Practicing gratitude is a huge key to help staying in the light. Please read my May 2020 newsletter on this topic. I'm also blessed to have good friends, who have helped me through some of my darkest moments. Some people aren't quite so fortunate. It's very easy to get inside your head and focus on the negative. When you're there, you don't see the positive that surrounds you and perhaps you just need to be reminded to look. Depression certainly comes in many flavors and sizes. For those who suffer from major depression, it can prevent them from performing simple daily tasks. There are those who are bipolar, who go from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows.

In keeping with the theme of the last few months, there are foods that can help. Let food be thy medicine. This list certainly isn't intended to provide a complete solution, but it's worth checking out.

**Fish oil:** There are dozens of studies out there on omega-3 fatty acids and depression. Not only is it fantastic for your heart health, but this supplement has been shown to work to help curb all kinds of depression, in people of all ages.

**Beans and Sunflower Seeds:** These are really good sources of folate (Vitamin B9), which potentially makes them helpful for easing the blues. Folate is thought to help create dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin, all chemicals in the brain, which help regulate mood. A recent study in the *Journal of Psychiatric Research* found that people with depression had low levels of folate in their systems. Long-term use is important for it to work effectively.

**Chocolate:** Boy was I happy to learn that many of the 300 compounds in chocolate can help fight depression. Many people like to eat chocolate simply because it can give them the same feeling they get when they're in love. I don't need it for that. I eat dark chocolate simply because it tastes good. But it's good to know it has other benefits.

**Seafood:** Many types contain Vitamin B12, which helps with depression. People with low levels are more likely to be impacted.

**Turmeric:** Not only is this spice good as an anti-inflammatory and is showing promise for preventing colon cancer, but there also are more than 100 scientific papers on its active ingredient, curcumin, and depression. Its effects seem to be comparable to the dangerous antidepressant *Prozac*, which is loaded with side effects. Curcumin has more positive results when combined with black pepper. I wrote an entire newsletter on this spice in October 2022. Be sure to check it out on my website.

**Saffron:** This very expensive spice has been found to be just as effective as antidepressants in reducing the symptoms of depression. Its active ingredients boost levels of serotonin, which is the "feel good" compound I mentioned earlier. According to an Australian study, when combined with turmeric, it's even more effective in reducing feelings of depression. Studies have also shown it works as well as *Prozac*.

**Ginger:** Honestly, I was very surprised to learn that ginger has long been used as a folk remedy to treat depression. In my research for *Ginger the Great*, my October 2020 newsletter, I didn't uncover this very important fact. Its components not only can help enhance mood, but can also act as a stimulant to provide more energy.

**Walnuts:** The most telling sign about this food is its shape. If you give it a good look, of what does it remind you? To me, it looks like a brain, which not surprisingly, is a strong indicator that they're good for the brain. Why? Not only are walnuts rich in serotonin, which helps with depression, but they're also a really good source of Omega-3s.

**Garlic and Onions:** These two foods aren't typically associated with helping ease the symptoms for depression, but they actually contain compounds that may be useful in boosting your mood. Surprisingly, they can also help fight the symptoms of anxiety, insomnia and fatigue.

The above list certainly isn't complete, but I hope it's whetted your appetite enough to encourage you to do some of your own research. Like with most ailments, people are often too quick to pop a pill in order to feel better rather than take the time to find something natural that will provide the same (or better) results without all the side effects. Natural medicine often takes longer to work than drugs from big pharma, but isn't your long-term health worth the extra time?

A few last things I'll mention before I close that have helped me when I was feeling down. Getting outside and going for walk or a hike always lifts my spirits. The combination of nature's beauty and the vitamin D from the sun always takes me back to the light. Another thing that helps me is a good long cry. Tears are so healing and I think they were created to literally wash away sadness. For those of you who practice yoga, the breathing techniques you learn and utilize can help ease the symptoms of depression.

Finally, supplements like St. John's Wort, Vitamin D3 and SAMe have been found to be effective in treating mild to moderate depression. However, St. John's wort has known interactions with over 800 pharmaceuticals, so be sure to check with a trusted medical professional before taking it, especially if you're already taking an antidepressant. But again, if you are having suicidal thoughts or know someone who is, please seek professional help immediately.

Have a wonderful and very happy month.