

CHANGE YOUR **FOOD** HEAL YOUR **MOOD**



3 steps to a happier body
and a healthier brain

Kelly Brogan MD

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3 Steps to a Happier Body and a Healthier Brain

Dr. Kelly Brogan
with Louise Kuo Habakus

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| You Just Want to Be Healthy and Happy | 4 |
| Myth No. 1 | 5 |
| Myth No. 2 | 6 |
| Myth No. 3 | 8 |
| Myth No. 4 | 9 |
| The Truth Is That Depression Isn't a Disease, It's a Message | 10 |
| The Gut-Brain Connection | 11 |
| Heal Your Gut to Heal Your Depression | 12 |
| Three Simple Ways to Start Healing Your Moods | 13 |
| 1. Eliminate Processed Foods and Food Toxins From Your Diet | 14 |
| 2. Add Whole Foods, Good Fats, and Therapeutic Foods to Your Diet | 15 |
| 3. Add Fermented Foods to Your Diet to Restore and Balance Your Gut Flora..... | 16 |
| You Have the Power to Change | 17 |
| Addendum 1: 7 Happy Body, Healthy Brain Foods | 18 |
| Addendum 2: The Happy Body, Healthy Brain Breakfast Smoothie..... | 20 |

You Just Want to Be Healthy and Happy

IMAGINE SOMEONE WHO IS VIBRANTLY HEALTHY AND HAPPY. Do you picture her medicine cabinet filled with prescription drugs? Do you see her groping for her morning coffee to kick start the day and “unwinding” every night with a glass of wine – or three? Do you suppose she eats Fruit Loops for breakfast and Pizza Hut for dinner?

Probably not.

Most of us have a sense of what true health is but have lost the roadmap along the way. We know that food matters, but we’ve been inundated by manipulative, mixed messages. Everyone from McDonald’s to Pfizer, from Kellogg’s to Aetna, has a vested interest in controlling what we think will make us healthy and happy. Business, and even the medical establishment, profit by keeping us dependent on their expert advice and latest “scientific” research.



But the information they dole out is based first on their bottom line, and second – maybe – on what is actually in our best interest. As a result, we’ve been given a bad road map. It leads to wealth and power for some, but rarely to health and happiness for you.

The promise of a happy pill belies a seductively elegant story about brain chemistry. It goes like this. You’re depressed because you’re missing something chemical that influences mood in a way that leads to depression. All you have to do is take a little capsule every day and you’re as good as new. Right?

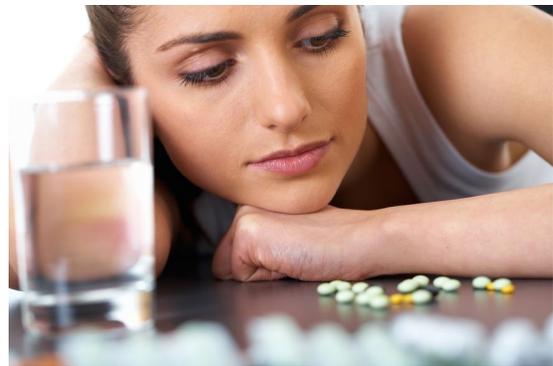
Wrong.

1 Myth Number 1

You have a brain “imbalance” that can be “treated” by a drug.

THERE ARE REAL REASONS FOR YOUR DEPRESSION, but a Prozac deficiency isn't one of them.

- ★ Neuroscience hasn't yet been able to describe what a “balanced” brain looks like, let alone how to assess one. So how can we claim to create it with drugs?
- ★ In most cases, psychiatric symptoms are just that: symptoms. They are signs that the body and mind are struggling.
 - ◆ Drugs may suppress symptoms, but they do nothing to address the reasons you're feeling lousy. Content with prescribing pharmaceutical solutions, providers are not asking *why* patients are sick. They are not discussing evidence-based alternatives to medication treatment that address and fix root causes.
- ★ Antidepressants have effects but they don't heal anything.



What we do know is that taking drugs doesn't resolve the underlying cause. It just creates a chemically-induced “new normal,” which is anything but normal. To make matters worse, it is not a simple process to stop. A patient who wants off the pharmaceutical merry-go-round may have difficulty finding an experienced clinician to go the distance – with patience, compassion, real knowledge about how to taper meds, and lifestyle recommendations to support a new approach. The journey back to the patient's original state can be so fraught that it is frequently characterized as a relapse. The data suggest that those taking meds are much more likely to relapse and end up worse off than those who are not.



READ MORE HERE:
[Stop the Madness: Coming Off Psych Meds](#)

2 Myth Number 2

Antidepressants work.

A PLACEBO EFFECT OCCURS when an inactive substance, such as water or saline, improves a patient's condition simply because the person expects that it will be helpful. Nowhere is this more true than with psychiatric medication. Compared with sugar pills, psych meds offer precious little advantage:



- ★ A review of *unpublished* studies found that antidepressants outperformed placebos in only 20 of 46 trials (less than half!).¹
- ★ In two different meta-analyses, Khan et al. found a 10% difference between placebo and antidepressant efficacy, and comparable suicide rates.²
- ★ The largest, non-industry-funded study, costing the public \$35 million, followed 4,000 patients treated with Celexa, Wellbutrin, Effexor, Zoloft, or Buspar. It found that only 3% of patients were in remission at 12 months.³

The limited upside benefit of meds comes with a hefty serving of downside risk. Like all pharmaceutical drugs, there are real risks to antidepressants. A May 2005 Harvard Medical School article lists a wide-ranging collection of side effects, including

¹ <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.0050045>

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10768687>

³ <https://www.madinamerica.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/STAR-D%20Protocol%20with%20Analytic%20Plan.pdf>

reduced blood clotting capacity, tics, loss of fine motor control, diminished sexual interest, drug interactions, loss of effectiveness, and suicide.⁴

Meet Sara.

Sara lost her pregnancy weight in three weeks and was ready to take on motherhood and the world. It wasn't until nine months postpartum that she felt like she'd been hit by a truck. She had become sluggish and forgetful, and was gaining weight. Her hair loss exceeded the typical postpartum strands. She struggled to have a bowel movement even twice a week. Sara was beyond overwhelmed and knew something was very wrong. In a 15-minute visit, a psychiatrist assured her that he knew exactly what was up. He diagnosed her with postpartum depression and handed her a prescription for Paxil. Not two weeks (and a couple of med changes) later, Sara was suicidal for the first time in her life. She drafted a letter to loved ones and planned to jump out of her window. "It just suddenly made sense. I felt calm and certain about it."

A thwarted suicide attempt, two medication changes, and three years later, Sara is told that she can never live life without Lexapro and Klonopin. She wishes someone had bothered to tell her that statistical analyses of clinical trials of antidepressant use have revealed an increased incidence of suicidal thoughts, impulsivity, hostility, and agitation in both adults and children.



READ MORE HERE:
Placebo Effect and Antidepressants
Depression and Serotonin

⁴ http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what_are_the_real_risks_of_antidepressants

3 Myth Number 3

Drug companies and the government have your best interests in mind.

WITH 70% OF AMERICANS taking at least one prescription drug,⁵ and more than 50% taking two or more – to the tune of \$250 billion per year – Big Pharma is laughing all the way to the bank.



- ★ The industry pays to advance its own interests. In addition to campaign contributions to elected officials and candidates, the pharmaceutical industry has spent over \$3.1 billion since 1998, and \$230 million in 2014 alone, to lobby Congress and federal agencies. There is no other industry – not even oil and gas, insurance, or electric utilities – that comes close.⁶
- ★ Drug companies manipulate the science in myriad ways. Their studies allow for placebo washout (eliminating those who are likely to respond to placebo before the study), replacement of nonresponders, and the use of inert placebos so subjects know they have received the treatment.
- ★ Psychiatric studies are four times more likely to be funded if they are positive, and null and negative findings are rarely, if ever, published.

⁵ <http://psychcentral.com/news/2013/06/20/70-percent-of-americans-take-prescription-drugs/56275.html>

⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/top.php?showYear=a&indexType=i>

4 Myth Number 4

That many doctors can't be wrong.

IF SO MANY PHYSICIANS ARE HANDING OUT THESE DRUGS, they must be right. If antidepressants are such a huge problem, then more clinicians would be talking about it and holding back on the meds, right? I wish.

Perhaps you recall that doctors used to recommend Camels and Lucky Strikes to their patients not too long ago. This is a big and complicated topic with dynamics that are also at the heart of many other drug-related controversies, including cancer, cholesterol, and vaccination.

- ★ Many practices are outdated. According to a 2013 analysis of ten years of articles published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, “about 40% of current medical practices may be ineffective and should be reconsidered.”⁷ The study identified 146 medical practices that should be reversed.
- ★ Change comes very slowly. It can take up to 17 years for large, bureaucratic educational institutions to fully update their courses. For example, there is ample evidence to prove that eating naturally occurring saturated fats doesn’t cause heart disease. But that is not what next year’s doctors are reading in their textbooks.
- ★ Pragmatics often trump evidence. Most major medical guideline recommendations (over 85%!) are not based on high-quality evidence. And in the absence of good science, doctors are influenced by such mundane and disconcerting variables as advertising, insurance coverage, and habit.⁸

I’m here to tell you that the only path to natural vibrancy and resilience leaves conventional medicine behind. I believe we’ve been duped. My entire training was based on a disease-care model that offers patients one solution – a prescription – and no shot at real health.

⁷ <https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2013/07/26/mayo-clinic-146-common-practices-we-should-reconsider>

⁸ <http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2014/09/23/video-explains-why-doctors-dont-always-know-best>

The Truth Is That Depression Isn't a Disease, It's a Message

THE HUMAN BODY INTERACTS WITH ITS ENVIRONMENT with deep intelligence. Your body created your panic attacks, anxiety, and other symptoms on purpose. Scientists call this an adaptive response. It means that it is a meaningful reaction to your environment. There's a very good reason for your brain and mood difficulties – to get your attention.



It's meant to grab you by the throat so you can make a change. But change what? What is at the root of depression and similar mental health symptoms?

The Inflammatory Model of Depression

Much of my writing and teaching are devoted to the compelling scientific literature around inflammatory models of depression and mental illness. Inflammation is the driving force behind the symptoms that we try to squash with medications.

Bodily states of inflammation – danger signaling – can translate to the brain, wreak havoc, and:

- ★ Influence how neurochemicals are produced
- ★ Have negative effects on mitochondria (energy production) and apoptosis (cell death)
- ★ Impact the very sensitive feedback systems around stress hormones such as cortisol
- ★ Elevate cytokines, rendering you even more depressed⁹

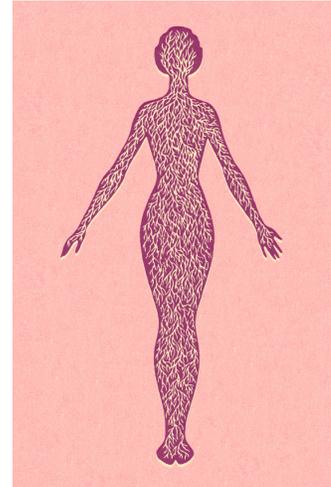
A recent study in *Translational Psychiatry* following 47 patients supports this idea that inflammation is the culprit in depression. Inflammatory genes were upregulated in about 75% of medication-free, melancholic depressive patients, whereas fewer than 5% were downregulated.

Read the study [here](#).

⁹ <http://kellybroganmd.com/article/new-psychiatry-psychoneuroimmunology/>

The Gut-Brain Connection

ONCE TRIGGERED, INFLAMMATION IS HIGHLY SELF-PERPETUATING. As these pathways are repeatedly activated, signaling is expedited because the body begins to recognize them as familiar – like trekking along your favorite hiking trail. Inflammation transfers information to the nervous system, typically through stimulation of major nerves such as the vagus, which links the gut and brain.



Stay with me here.

This is actually a bit of good news. You may think that you were born with bad genes or low serotonin. But it's far more likely that your depression is just a complex, nonspecific symptom of chronic illness. You probably have an unhealthy inflammatory balance that is driven by cortisol dysfunction stemming from a sick gut.

And this is good news, how? It is very good news – because we know how to heal the gut.

Key takeaways:

- ★ Inflammation is the primary driver of chronic illness
- ★ Our gastrointestinal tract houses at least 70% of our immune system
- ★ We outsource countless bodily functions to our beneficial microbial communities (“microbiomes”) – these microorganisms outnumber our human cells 10:1
- ★ The gut is the gatekeeper of inflammatory response



READ MORE HERE:
[From Gut to Brain - The Inflammation Connection](#)

Heal Your Gut to Heal Your Depression

WE CAN ADDRESS DEPRESSION and other symptoms by treating, protecting, and nourishing this microbiome – the specific combination of beneficial microbes in our gut. There are many factors that impact the health of your gut and the makeup of your microbiome, for better or worse, including:

- ★ Vaginal birth and breastfeeding
- ★ Exposure to medications, including oral contraceptives, NSAIDs (which can cause gut permeability),¹⁰ and antibiotics
- ★ Toxins, such as GMOs, pesticides, and plasticizers¹¹
- ★ Diet and nutrition

In this ebook, I want to give you three ways that you can reduce inflammation and optimize gut health, creating a happier body and healthier moods.

A NOTE ABOUT GLUTEN:

- ★ There's been an explosion of research implicating the immune-modulating and inflammatory effects of gluten and sugar (often co-occurring). Many individuals perceive that they are totally "fine" until that day when they're not. In reality, there has been a long period of "incubation" of symptoms.
- ★ No matter what you've read, you should know that eating gluten provokes an inflammatory response in everyone. In about 80% of people, it precipitates intestinal wall changes that allow for various compounds, food particles, and bacteria and their immunotoxic components (e.g., LPS or lipopolysaccharides) to enter the bloodstream. In animal models, LPS is used to induce "depression." There are many scientific studies establishing the role of inflammation in depression, including postpartum.

¹⁰ <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/04/17/psychoneuroimmunology-inflammation.aspx>

¹¹ <http://kellybroganmd.com/snippet/pigs-warn-undeniable-evidence-roundup-toxicity/>

Three Simple Ways to Start Healing Your Moods

THERE'S MORE TO THIS STORY, and I hope you will take charge of your health by doing some research. I invite you to do some additional reading on my blog.

In the meantime, consider making changes in the following three areas:



Eliminate processed foods and food toxins from your diet



Add whole foods, good fats, and therapeutic foods to your diet



Add fermented foods to support gut ecology

1

1. Eliminate Processed Foods and Food Toxins From Your Diet

WHAT ARE PROCESSED FOODS, REALLY? Broadly speaking, they are *anything in a package*.

More specifically, they are anything that contain more than one to three ingredients, including:

- ★ Hydrogenated vegetable oils
- ★ Preservatives
- ★ Dyes
- ★ Emulsifiers, tenderizers, and taste enhancers
- ★ Sugars

Processed food is chemicalized so that it is portable and shelf-stable. It is manipulated for texture, mouthfeel, and taste. It also tends to be polluted with toxicants, such as pesticides. Buying organic is an important start. You can also use the [Dirty Dozen](#), [Clean 15 Guide](#).



2

2. Add Whole Foods, Good Fats, and Therapeutic Foods to Your Diet

ONCE YOU ELIMINATE PROCESSED

(bagged and boxed) foods with long ingredients, you're left with whole, simple foods that often don't even come with a Nutrition Facts label:

- ★ Fresh fruits and vegetables, including root vegetables
- ★ Pastured meats, wild fish, eggs, nuts, and seeds
- ★ Traditional fats like olive oil, coconut oil, or grass-fed ghee



As a start, avoid gluten-containing grains. Quinoa, buckwheat, white rice, and white potatoes may ultimately be fine; however, most of my patients benefit from a temporary 30-day break to really heal first before adding them back in.

3

3. Add Fermented Foods to Your Diet to Restore and Balance Your Gut Flora

PREBIOTICS AND PROBIOTICS ARE

ESSENTIAL TO GUT HEALTH. Prebiotics are food for probiotics. Probiotics are the good guys – beneficial live bacteria that help to keep the ecology of your gut in balance. You probably knew this already.

But did you know that probiotics can actually reverse psychiatric symptoms?

No, I'm not kidding.

So this is what all the fuss is about. Everyone is extolling the merits of fermentation. Fermented foods are simply probiotic foods. Long before probiotics became available as supplements from health food stores, people in virtually all cultures enjoyed one form of fermented food or another. And there's no better way to consume a rich array of healthy bacteria than to consume them through wholly natural sources, such as:

- ★ Sauerkraut
- ★ Pickles
- ★ Kimchi and other fermented vegetables
- ★ Coconut kefir

You'll want to make sure they're truly fermented (as opposed to just pickled via vinegar). Fermented foods are delicious and flavorful. They are relatively easy to make on your own, too. This is an easy and powerful basic step toward a happier body and a healthier brain.



You Have the Power to Change

NUTRITION HAS MORE POWER than any other single intervention on earth. Crazy, right?

Who knew? Most people don't because no one has the incentive to teach you. And this includes medical doctors. News flash: corporations, governments, and bureaucratic health care conglomerates don't have your best interests at heart.



But I believe you are ready to live a conscious life. A curious life. A mindful life. A life in which you reconnect to your own power to heal, to feel free, unafraid, and well.

You can start now by making some of the changes in this ebook.

To help you get started, I've also included a list of seven therapeutic foods and my all-time favorite breakfast smoothie recipe.

Addendum 1: 7 Happy Body, Healthy Brain Foods

Sauerkraut



Why: Traditional cultures used fermentation as a pre-refrigeration preservation technique. The lactic acid producing microbes that act on the cabbage are diverse and contribute greatly to replenishing the beneficial bacteria in our guts. Given the inherent limitations of our constantly evolving understanding of the gut microbiome, food-based probiotics are an intelligent way to support the immune system, metabolism, and inflammatory response.

How: Start with ¼ teaspoon of the juice from a lactofermented sauerkraut, kimchi, or pickles. Work up to a daily serving of 1 tablespoon or more. Hawthorne Valley, Bubbies, and Wildbrine are good brands to purchase until you are ready to make your own!

Liver powder



Why: Liver is a lost superfood and the best multivitamin money can buy. A unique source of fat soluble vitamins such as preformed A, D, K and E, minerals, usable iron, antioxidants, and B vitamins. Grass-fed liver should be consumed about twice a week, and a desiccated liver powder can make that easier.

How: Radiant Life brand liver can be incorporated into soups, stews, or even smoothies with minimal alteration of flavor. Start with 1 tablespoon twice a week.

Sole



Why: Himalayan sea salt boasts over 80 ionized minerals encrusted into the earth more than 200 million years ago. Consumption of this salt supports electrolyte balance, hydration, pH, detoxification, and may also contribute to bone health, cardiovascular wellbeing, and even hair and skin radiance.

How: Fill a glass jar ¼ of the way with Himalayan Sea Salt or Real Salt, and fill with filtered water. Let sit overnight. Take one teaspoon of this saturated mixture and put into a glass of filtered water to drink first thing in the morning. “Kits” can also be found online with salt rocks and jars.

Potato Starch



Why: Starch comes in two varieties, one of which is not enzymatically broken down and serves as a source of fermentable fiber in the intestines, producing anti-inflammatory saturated fats such as butyrate. After one month of a no-grain, no added sugar, high natural fat diet, introducing resistant starch can contribute to beneficial changes in the intestine which contribute to blood sugar balance and metabolism support.

How: 4 tablespoons daily of Bob's Red Mill Potato Starch (or equivalent) in food or in water (you can do it as a shot with each meal).

Gelatin



Why: Because our diets are heavily focused on muscle meat consumption, we lose out on the benefits of consuming bones, skin, and tendons as was ancestral practice. Traditional bone broths are used in gut healing protocols such as the GAPs diet for mucosal repair, while the high glycine content of gelatin may help with insomnia, anxiety, joints, hair and skin.

How: Use Great Lakes gelatin for warm foods and/or making easy jello snacks (1 tbsp of gelatin mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of almost boiling water and 1 and $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of organic juice, put in the fridge for 3 hours), and use the green Hydrolyzed Collagen to put 1-2 tablespoons in any liquid or food as it dissolves flavorlessly.

Coconut Oil



Why: A primary source of traditional fat throughout the tropics, coconut oil has a unique profile in its saturated fat content – specifically medium chain triglycerides. These fats don't require pancreatic enzymes for digestion and are immediately available for energy. Studied for cognition, lipid balance, immune support, and metabolism, this food is a must for transitioning to a fat burning metabolism for mind and body.

How: Add half a tablespoon to morning hot water/tea, cook with it, or add to smoothies. Work up to one tablespoon daily.

Turmeric



Why: This herb has been studied for immune modulation, anti-inflammatory, liver detox, and even antidepressant qualities demonstrated to have comparable efficacy to over a dozen different drugs.

How: Best absorbed when warmed with oil, and pepper, add to savory foods or make into a Golden tea with coconut milk – make a paste with 2 tablespoons of organic turmeric in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water, then warm with milk, a teaspoon of coconut oil, and raw honey to taste.

Addendum 2: The Happy Body, Healthy Brain Breakfast Smoothie

The KB Smoothie

- ★ Half a cup of frozen organic cherries (or other berries)
- ★ 8 oz of fermented coconut water, coconut water, or filtered water
- ★ 3 tablespoons of collagen hydrolysate as a protein base
- ★ One tablespoon of sprouted nut butter or **sunbutter**
- ★ 3 pastured egg yolks
- ★ One tablespoon of coconut oil
- ★ 1-2 tablespoons of ghee
- ★ 1-2 tablespoons of raw cocoa powder
- ★ Blend!

