

Got The Winter Blues? Vitamin B12 and Other B Vitamins May Help Alleviate Depression

By: Talya Dagan, Natural News

Adding vitamins to your diet can help reduce the feeling of depression, winter blues or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). B vitamins, especially vitamin B12, have been shown to help those suffering from feelings of anxiety or depression. Simply adding nutritional supplements can help lift the blues, especially during stressful periods of life. Many vitamins can be sourced from foods, but some, like vitamin B12, are difficult to source from food, so vitamin supplements are suggested. Winter depression and seasonal affective disorder are not only mental conditions. B vitamins are major contributors to how the brain and nervous system function, so getting proper nutrients in the diet can improve mood.

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is needed to make red blood cells and nerves, and natural sources of vitamin B12 are only found in animal products, such as meat, poultry, eggs and dairy, and cannot be made in the body. As there are no vegetarian sources of vitamin B12, vegetarians need to supplement. Stomach acid is needed to absorb vitamin B12 from foods, and many people do not have enough stomach acid to break down foods in order to obtain this vital nutrient, especially as aging decreases the amount of stomach acid secretion. For this reason, the National Institute of Medicine recommends that those over the age of 50 add supplemental B12 to their diet. Early symptoms of a vitamin B12 deficiency include numbness or tingling in the hands, joint pain, loss of taste or smell, and balance problems. A severe deficiency can create symptoms of depression and even delusional thinking.

Biotin

Biotin is one of the water-soluble B vitamins. Known as B7 or vitamin H, biotin is used to turn sugar into energy in the body. Necessary for the walls of every cell in the body, biotin is also used in maintaining the nerve cells. Studies have shown that biotin can also reduce stress by maintaining the proper functioning of the nerves. Biotin added to the diet can help symptoms of depression, or the lassitude and somnolence associated with the winter blues.

Niacin

Another B vitamin, niacin, known as vitamin B3, has been shown to help with depression and chronic brain syndrome, or dementia. Niacin is made in the body and can also be found in a variety of foods such as milk, eggs, yeast, beans, meat and fish. Niacin may also help improve memory, according to some sources.

Thiamin

Thiamin, or vitamin B1, is used to make energy by breaking down sugar in the body. It is also utilized in creating red blood cells. Thiamin can be found in foods such as grains and yeast, as well as in dairy products. Thiamin has been found to help treat symptoms of depression and irritability.

Other remedies for winter blues

Other vitamins and minerals can also help alleviate lower brain function and symptoms of depression, including zinc, iodine, magnesium, vitamin C and the omega-3 fatty acids. Some people find the use of a light therapy device or full spectrum lighting can be helpful in dealing with seasonal affective disorder as well.

Sources include:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov>

<http://www.health.harvard.edu>