



## Food against depression

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**Abstract.** This disease has been known since antiquity, although it began to be seriously studied only in the 19th century, when the term “*depression*” appeared to describe it. Before this, the depressed and depressed mood of patients, which could last for weeks or even months, was called *melancholy*.

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Moreover, the same name was used by ancient healers, including Hippocrates. By the way, he said that “melancholia is a separate disease that is accompanied by certain physical and mental symptoms.”

## Is depression a fashionable disease or a dangerous mental condition?

In 2013, an article appeared in the journal *JAMA Psychiatry* that, according to research by American scientists, depression affects 30.6% of men and 33.3% of women. Of course, the difference is not big, but it proves the fact that women are more prone to it. In addition, incidence statistics vary from country to country.

For example, according to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), in the UK, 17 out of 1000 men and 25 out of 1000 women suffer from this disease. However, if you also include people who feel depressed, their number among both sexes increases to 98 people per 1000.

And research in Australia has shown that only 1 out of 5 people suffering from depression comes to seek help from specialists, while the rest are not even aware that “chronic pain, insomnia and fatigue” are characteristic signs of severe mental illness.

By the way, even in different people depression manifests itself differently. Men and women, old people and teenagers can experience various symptoms, which are accompanied by feelings of depression, dissatisfaction with oneself and eternal fatigue. But the worst thing is not even the condition in which the patient lives. These are terrible consequences that can affect the entire body as a whole and cause irreversible changes.

## Treatments for Depression

Almost everyone knows that today depression is most often treated with antidepressants. However, such drug treatment is not always advisable. This is also proven by the fact that in ancient times this disease was successfully treated with music therapy and a set of useful tinctures.

Today, when treating depression, doctors advise first of all:

- change your train of thought and learn to love the world around you and yourself in it;
- spend more time with family and friends;
- communicate a lot, especially since a huge number of sites and forums have appeared on the Internet for like-minded people who together learn to live without depression;
- walk more;
- workout;
- get rid of bad habits;
- finally reconsider your own diet.

### **Proper nutrition in the fight against depression**

Recent studies have shown that residents of Scandinavian and Asian countries are less susceptible to depression than residents of other countries. And the whole point is what they eat. Doctors say that, even despite the absence of a diet for depression, as such, we must not forget that there are certain foods that can not only help overcome it, but also influence the further course of its treatment.

Citing as an example the same population of the above regions, doctors list groups of products that must be present both in the diet of patients and in the diet of healthy people to prevent the development of this disease.

- **Carbohydrates.** These are good mood stimulants that promote the production of serotonin and thereby significantly improve our well-being. The only thing is that not all of them are equally useful. Therefore, it is better to replace the sweet donut with fruits, vegetables and grains, which will not only bring benefits, but will also cleanse the body due to the dietary fiber it contains. [1]
- **Protein-rich foods.** For example, chicken or turkey meat. It contains tyrosine, which increases dopamine levels in the body. As a result, a person's feeling of anxiety goes away and concentration improves, as well as the level of vital energy increases. In addition to the meat itself, you can eat fish, soy and dairy products, and legumes. [2]
- **Products with vitamin B.** They reduce the risk of developing this disease. Moreover, it is best to give preference to vitamins B2 and B6, supplementing them with folic acid. These can include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes. [3]
- **Amino acids,** in particular tryptophan. It stimulates the production of serotonin and permanently relieves annoying depression. In order to replenish the body's reserves of tryptophan, you should introduce more meat into your diet, preferably chicken, fish, eggs, soy products, chocolate, legumes and oatmeal.

### **Top 7 foods to help overcome depression:**

1. Turmeric. The results of recent studies have shown that this seasoning can not only fight depression, but also improve the effects of antidepressants. [4]
2. Green tea. It not only has a beneficial effect on the functioning of the heart and brain, but also calms and improves mood. This is because it contains L-theanine, an amino acid that penetrates the brain and has a positive effect on its functioning. Moreover, it is quickly absorbed and acts almost instantly.
3. Fish. It contains omega-3 fatty acids [5], which are essential for normal brain activity.

4. Nuts and seeds. They contain alpha-linolenic acid, or a type of omega-3 acid, which improves brain function, helps maintain calm and prevent anxiety, and magnesium [6], which promotes the production of serotonin.
5. Bananas. [7] They contain melatonin, or a hormone that helps regulate sleep. After all, insomnia is a common sign of depression.
6. Spinach [8] or seaweed, although any other type will do. These are natural antioxidants [9].
7. Cocoa. It not only improves mood, but also promotes the production of useful substances to normalize brain activity. Also, despite containing a small amount of caffeine (100 ml of cocoa from natural bean powder is 5-10 mg of caffeine, which is six times less than tea and 12-15 times less than coffee), cocoa contains special substances that improve mood and reduce anxiety, which scientists from Australia have experimentally proven. [10]

### **Foods that make depression worse**

The famous clinical psychologist Deborah Serani in her book “Living with Depression” emphasizes that when treating it, first of all, you should give up alcoholic beverages and caffeine. They not only sharply increase the level of glucose in the body, which can lead to sudden mood swings, but also cause a person to feel irritable, thereby aggravating the situation.

In addition, during periods of depression it is better to avoid foods with trans fats and simple carbohydrates. These include confectionery products and semi-finished products. Worsening a person's mood through the same surges in blood sugar levels, they also affect the general condition of the body and lead to the development of various diseases.

In conclusion, I would like to note that no matter what method of dealing with depression you choose, the main thing is to believe in its success. After all, depression is not a death sentence, but simply one of the integral aspects of modern life!

By the way, for the first time we experience it at birth, leaving our mother's cozy little world, and we don't even remember about it. So is it worth being sad about something you can handle? Hardly.

### **Literature**

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