

understanding the **Blues**

Want to know how to beat depression?
Take a second look at your diet, says
Tracey Dawkins.

Have you lost interest in life's little pleasures? Do you have irregular sleeping patterns? Do you suffer from terrible mood swings? Do you feel worthless? Have you even lost that sexual feeling?

If all your answers to the above questions are 'yes', then you bear the symptoms of depression. You're not alone, as one in four people in the UK suffers from depression. So what makes a person depressed? Nobody knows that question for sure. As you read this feature, experts are still debating and arguing the definition of depression. However there are some accepted factors that seem to trigger it.

Sudden large lifestyle changes combined with hormonal changes (e.g. after children, menopause, etc.) could increase the possibility of depression. Also traumatic experiences

can be a strong possibility of causing depression. These experiences could be a sudden death of a family member, redundancy, divorce and having a serious illness.

Today's fast moving lifestyle does no justice to our state of mind either. Have you noticed that more and more people are working from home, so they can be in a more relaxed environment? Sounds good doesn't it? It's actually really a **BAD IDEA**. By spending lots of time alone can be damaging, as we are only human beings and interaction with others is absolutely essential. So if you hear someone say 'I don't need anyone', don't believe them! As a matter of fact, that could be a strong possibility that they are suffering from depression. There are so many ways to mend 'a broken heart'—Prozac being the most common method to beat the blues. Try and take another route, as there are speculations that

the side effects of taking Prozac can actually trigger suicidal thoughts.

Increasingly more people are taking control of depression, by simply changing their diet. So it's really worth having a look at your typical diet and keep a diary (for a week) and make a note what food and drink you have on a daily basis. It's also vital to make a note of the **TIME** and a rough amount of what you consume. Sounds silly? Actually recognising your eating patterns is your first step of beating depression. So what should you exactly look for in your diet? What you need to consider is what type of food you have almost daily. Also consider what food (don't forget drinks!) you have in large quantities. Your goal is to maintain a healthy balance—which means trying your best to include a variety of food. Remember too much of one thing may not be good for you!





Sadly, there is no definite scientific answer that food can influence the way you feel. Here's that question that's keeping you on the edge of your seats: which foods affects the moods? The general rule is not to skip breakfast and keep to regular meal times. It's best to choose the food that release energy slowly, like oats and refined wholegrain.

- In order to keep a healthy mind as well as body is to drink plenty of water! We all know that it is good for you and it can be boring to drink, but it's worth having to keep the mood swings and the depression at bay!! Try and aim to consume six to eight glasses per day.
- Also aim to eat five portions of fruits and vegetables daily. Sounds a lot?

It's not a lot, as one portion is roughly equivalent of a handful. Remember organic is best!

- Proteins— it's important to eat some meat, fish, egg, cheese, beans, nuts or seeds everyday. Not only do they provide the vital nutrients your body needs, but it smoothes out any negative effects, including poor concentration, fatigue and food cravings.
- Essential fatty acids (Omega 3 type)—this is found in oily fish such as mackerel and sardines. It improves the formation and functioning of the brain. Seeds and nuts, such as sunflower seeds,

pumpkin seeds, brazil nuts and walnuts are described as 'good mood' nutrients.

After reading this information you would like to think it over with a nice cup of tea. That sounds nice and relaxing. In fact one cup too many can promote anxiety, mood swings and depression big time, as it contains caffeine. Caffeine is also found in cola drinks, chocolate, and as we all know—coffee. Try your hardest and stay well away from food and drinks containing alcohol, certain artificial additives—also known as E-numbers—and hydrogenated fats—as they are a big no-no.

