

Passing Grade

Vitamin D may help fight depression—a risk associated with type 2 by C. Fiedler



If you've got your AARP card and the blues, you are not alone; 13 percent of older folks have signs of depression. But that might not be for the reasons you think. It could be a lack of vitamin D, according to a report in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Why does this happen? "There are vitamin D receptors in emotion-regulating brain areas," says lead researcher Witte J. G. Hoogendijk, M.D., Ph.D., at VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. "Low vitamin D status increases serum parathyroid hormone (PTH) levels. High PTH levels can cause depression."

In the study, blood vitamin D levels were 14 percent lower in individuals with major and minor depression, while parathyroid hormone levels were an average of 5 percent higher in those with minor depression and 33 percent higher in those with major depression.

You may be low on vitamin D if you shun the sun or don't eat enough foods fortified with vitamin D or fail to take supplements of the nutrient.


How to fix this situation? Research done by Michael Holick, M.D., at Boston University School of Medicine suggests getting out in the sun for 5 to 30 minutes between the hours of 10 A.M. and 3 P.M. a few times a week (expose your arms, legs and back without sunscreen, but protect your face). You can also add more fortified dairy products or take a supplement.

For adequate intake, the government recommends that people over age 50 get between 400 and 600 IU of vitamin D each day, but most researchers agree that without enough sun exposure, 800 to 1000 IU of the vitamin may be required.

The Glee of Yoga

Laughter yoga, also known as hasya yoga, is the practice of laughing for 15 to 20 minutes with short breaks for yogic breathing. Research has shown that yoga benefits blood pressure, reduces stress and aids muscle tone. Other research looking into the benefits of mirthful laughter also has shown giggles to be healthful.

"In my experience, 70 to 80 percent of illness is related to stress, and laughter yoga unwinds the negative effects of stress," says creator Madan Kataria, M.D., a family physician in India. Dr. Kataria suggests



Fast Forward
For an easy-to-understand course on yoga basics, visit RemedyLife.com/yoga



PATIENT INFORMATION

LOVAZA® (lō-vā-zā)
(omega-3-acid ethyl
esters) Capsules

LOVAZA®
omega-3-acid ethyl esters

Read the Patient Information that comes with LOVAZA before you start taking it, and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your condition or treatment.

What is LOVAZA?

LOVAZA is a prescription medicine for adults called a lipid-regulating medicine. LOVAZA is made of omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are natural substances that your body needs. They are found naturally in some plants and in the oil of certain fish, such as salmon and mackerel.

LOVAZA is used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower very high triglycerides (fats) in your blood. Before taking LOVAZA, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can lower high blood fats by:

- losing weight, if you are overweight
- increasing physical exercise

Treatment with LOVAZA has not been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes.

LOVAZA has not been studied in children under the age of 18 years.

What should I tell my doctor before taking LOVAZA?

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicine, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LOVAZA and certain other medicines can interact causing serious side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take medicines:

- to reduce clotting — known as anticoagulants or blood thinners. These include aspirin, warfarin, coumarin and clopidogrel (PLAVIX).

Tell your doctor if you **are allergic to fish**.

LOVAZA may not be right for you.

Who should not take LOVAZA?

Do not take LOVAZA if you:

- **are allergic to LOVAZA or any of its ingredients.**

What are the possible side effects of LOVAZA?

- The most common side effects with LOVAZA are burping, infection, flu symptoms and upset stomach.

Talk to your doctor if you have side effects that bother you or that will not go away. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

These are not all the side effects with LOVAZA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a complete list.

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you try two forms of laughter: hearty and greeting. Hearty laughter has you laugh with your head tilted back and both arms raised toward the sky. For greeting laughter, shake hands with four or five folks in the group while laughing. It can change your mood within minutes. And, says Dr. Kataria, because the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter, you get the same benefits from each.

Super C

When it comes to being a

multitasker, vitamin C is one

of the busiest. Not only does

it promote system-wide

tissue repair, but research

indicates that it can also

help keep your heart

healthy by improving

endothelial dysfunction. In

a 2007 issue of *Diabetes Care*,

researchers from the University

of Warwick in the United Kingdom

published a study that found that the

power of Vitamin C may be particularly

protective for people with diabetes, for whom

blood vessel damage is worse than usual and highly dangerous. Although

large clinical trials have yet to confirm that vitamin C helps atherosclerosis,

James M. May, M.D., professor of medicine and molecular physiology and

biophysics at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, says, "most feel that

the endothelial benefit is real."

Vitamin C isn't just essential for collagen synthesis (an important component of blood vessels) and involved in bile acid formation (linking it to

cholesterol degradation), notes Bonnie Gluck, M.S., R.D., a clinical dietitian

with New York Methodist Hospital. By stimulating nitric oxide release, she

explains, citing articles in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, and *Epidemiology*, it also dilates

blood vessels and has an anticlotting effect. "There's [also] some evidence

that those with diabetes may require increased amounts of C to achieve tissue saturation—the total amount the body can absorb and utilize at a time,"

according to Gluck. To reap the most benefit, start with natural sources such as fruits. —Nancy Christie



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Weekly diabetes alerts will keep you in the know about how to take care of yourself & your diabetes. Sign up at RemedyLife.com

Eat Those Veggies

High-fiber veggies are good for more than glucose control

Good news! Postmenopausal women with breast cancer who ate a plant-based diet high in lignans—plant compounds that you'll find in seeds, whole grains, vegetables and fruits—were 70 percent less likely to die from the disease, according to research from the University of Buffalo and Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Researchers looked at the dietary lignan intakes of 1,122 women diagnosed with breast cancer who participated in the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study between 1996 and 2001.

Postmenopausal women diagnosed with breast cancer who reported high intakes of lignans, which in this study were supplied mostly by dark bread, peaches, broccoli, oranges, winter squash, strawberries, coffee and tea, had a statistically significant reduction. "Dietary lignans are predominately

found in plant foods, so a diet that is high in plant foods is the best thing you can do to reduce your risk of cancer or to improve your survival after breast cancer," says Susan E. McCann, M.D., associate professor in the department of cancer prevention and control at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo. To get the most lignan bang for your buck, aim for the National Cancer Institute's recommendation of 3½ to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables.



indeed give the 50-plus crowd a boost in brainpower just when they need it most.

That's because around age 50 we begin to experience things like memory lapses (where did I put those keys?) and reduced ability to pay attention (excuse me?). The majority of the studies showed that aerobic exercise resulted in increased cardiorespiratory fitness and significant improvements in processing speed, visual and auditory attention and motor function. These effects may be due to an increase in cerebral blood flow and an increase in brain metabolism. ■

Lower Glucose, Boost Brains

You know exercise can reduce your need for insulin (temporarily) and help anyone with type 2 diabetes or prediabetes control glucose levels. But did you know it can make you think better? According to a recent review of studies in The Cochrane Library, aerobic exercise can

Improve Your Balance—Two Ways



Want to keep your blood sugar in balance? Try the ancient Chinese martial art of tai chi, which combines deep breathing with moving and balancing postures. According to a study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, tai chi can help improve the control of type 2 diabetes. "Our studies suggest that tai chi can prompt a fall in blood glucose levels and/or improve blood glucose metabolism, sparking a better immune response," says lead researcher Kuender D. Yang, M.D., Ph.D., of the department of medical research at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital at Kaohsiung, Chang Gung University, Taiwan. "The exercise can also boost fitness levels and a feeling of well-being, which may then boost the health of the immune system." Indirectly, tai chi can increase the sensitivity of cells to insulin. Researchers asked volunteers to practice tai chi for 12 weeks, three times a week for 60 minutes. The results showed that tai chi significantly decreased A1Cs from 7.59 to 7.16 percent in the diabetic patients, which researchers say is also associated with an increase in certain immune factors.

