

HEALTHY MOOD & MIND

YOUR HEALTH PROFESSOR



■ Taking the right steps to support your healthy mood is one of the best ways to promote all-around good health and wellness. NOW's complete line of mood supporting-supplements makes it easier than ever!

References:

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* These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.



Nutrition for Optimal Wellness

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You might not realize it, but a healthy mood can be worth its weight in gold. When your mood is healthy, you're more productive, more inspired, more energetic and more able to cope with the occasional bouts of adversity that each one of us is subject to. But let's be honest. Keeping a positive mental attitude isn't always the *easiest* task in the world. Life is stressful, and can quickly take a toll on even the best of moods.

When you take into consideration how many millions of individuals are now using over-the-counter prescription drugs such as Prozac, Zoloft, and an endless pharmacy full of others, it makes you wonder why so many of us seem to be down in the dumps. Has life just gotten too out of control? Are we really *that* stressed out? Or are the drug companies simply cashing in on our natural desire to feel good, even at the expense of our normal chemical balance? Perhaps it's a combination of all three?

Understanding Neurotransmitters

Science has taught us many interesting things about the quality and conditional factors of the human mood. One of the most fascinating, is the role that neurotransmitters play – most notably, serotonin. If you're not familiar with this term, serotonin is a chemical messenger hormone that is produced by the brain from protein. Its primary role is to carry electrical impulses from the brain to the central nervous system. Interestingly, the efficacy of this process has a strong influence on the quality of emotion.¹

Depression, manic conditions, bipolar disorders, insomnia, anxiety and other neurological disorders have been linked to an imbalance in the brain's ability to produce and use serotonin. In fact, some of the most famous clinical (and non-clinical) studies continue to suggest that serotonin imbalances serve as the foundation for some of the most common mood abnormalities.²

Dopamine is another good example. This chemical neurotransmitter plays a fundamental role in feelings of pleasure, emotion, movement, thought and many other aspects of human behavior. Researchers have attributed imbalances in dopamine levels to more severe neural conditions such as aggression, schizophrenia, paranoia and multiple-personality disorders.³ And while more research is clearly needed to factually determine why this is, it's clear that human mood is at the mercy of more influences than any of us could possibly imagine.

And like every other major system of the body, the components that make up the neurological structures of the brain are dependent on a number of factors. Nutrition is no exception to the rule. As science continues to evolve, researchers have been quite successful in determining what natural products show the greatest promise in supporting a healthy mood.

Kava

Kava is a natural sedative herb that has seen immense popularity based on its ability to encourage a natural state of relaxation. This is possible thanks to the high concentrations of *kavalactones* present in the plant's thick roots.⁴ Kavalactones have been shown in many studies to promote a calming effect on the body's limbic system – a region of the brain that is responsible for regulating many facets of mood and emotion.⁵ When taken as recommended, Kava appears to be safe. Individuals with compromised liver health should consult their physician prior to using Kava.

St. John's Wort

St. John's Wort is extracted from a perennial herb that blooms during the summer months from June to September. As the subject of many studies, St. John's Wort has been shown to help balance mood, promote feelings of calmness, and even support healthy sleeping patterns.⁶ Hypericin, an active pigment in St. John's Wort, has been linked to its ability to assist the brain in manufacturing serotonin.⁷ As a result, many loyal users find it beneficial in providing the balance needed to maintain a positive mood naturally, and without harsh side effects.

Valerian

Tossing, turning and lost sleep are some of the most common physical byproducts of an unhealthy mood. Valerian is a 100% natural, safe and non-addictive herbal extract that works in the brain by inhibiting the nerve impulses that prevent the body from attaining pure, uninterrupted slumber.⁸ It has been used safely for centuries, and is now considered one of the most popular natural, non-OTC solutions for calming the mind in order to obtain adequate sleep.

GABA

GABA is an amino acid produced naturally by the brain. It inhibits the over-stimulation of excessive nerve impulses - a condition that often leads to stress, irritability and sleep deprivation. Appropriately dubbed the brain's "natural calming agent", GABA assists nerve cells in properly communicating with one another. This unique activity helps induce relaxation while easing nervous tensions naturally.⁹ Many users have found that GABA is best utilized when taken before bed. Unlike OTC sleep aids, it doesn't cause drowsiness, but keeps neurotransmitters from over-firing, thus making it possible for the body to fall asleep naturally.

NOW understands the importance of supporting and maintaining a healthy mood state, and offers an extensive selection of herbs and other natural products that can help you do *just* that. Be sure to look for them at fine health food retailers nationwide.

