

[IMAGE]

## **Boost Your Mood**

By Julie T. Chen, MD

When it comes to mild depression or "low mood," there are other a lot of options that do not involve pharmaceuticals. In the studies for St. John's Wort, it is seen to have similar efficacy as SSRI (serotonin selective reuptake inhibitor) medications for depression. In severe depression, the St. John's Wort was not as effective. If you do your research, you can find a lot of help when it comes to your mental health in the world of alternative medicine.

I highly recommend a combination approach of mind-body therapy, supplements, and talk therapy.

Within the realm of mind-body therapy, exercise, massage therapy, biofeedback, hypnotherapy, guided imagery, meditation, yoga, tai chi, qi gong, and many others are all great options to help you de-stress and help to use your body to benefit your mind and vice versa.

Above and beyond mind-body therapy, studies show that cognitive behavioral therapy, talk therapy, or psychotherapy can be very helpful as an adjunctive to other mainstay treatments for depression and "low mood." So, I usually will recommend that my patients either set up regular times to speak to a chaplain, therapist, or close family/friend member. Having social support also has been seen to be extremely beneficial for various mood symptoms or difficult life transition periods.

people laughing - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark And finally, when my patients are interested in supplements for "low moods," some of the mainstay supplements I go to are St. John's Wort, SAM-e, rhodiola, ashwagandha, and various supplements to help battle against insomnia. Frequently, patients with low moods also have difficulty with sleep. Once the sleep issues are corrected, frequently the mood improves. On the other hand, frequently when the mood is improved, sleep also improves as well. So I will usually treat both issues concomitantly. One word of caution regarding these supplements for "low mood," if you have mania or bipolar disorder, you will need to check with your psychiatrist before using these because some of these, for example SAM-e, can worsen mania.

So, in summary, if you are battling "low mood," make sure to get a thorough evaluation by your primary care doctor or psychiatrist. Then, you can discuss various treatment options such as those mentioned above.

Just keep in mind that your safety is first and because various mood conditions can overlap, it is important to get the right diagnosis first.

Here are some tips to help you make sure you are staying on the safe and right track if you are feeling low:

1. Seek an evaluation first.
2. Engage your loved ones in your life in helping you over this difficult period in your life. Social support is important to your healing process.
3. Think outside the medicine cabinet and consider mind-body therapies and talk therapy as well as supplements and medications.
4. If you are taking supplements or vitamins, make sure to inform your prescribing physician if you are on any mood medications to prevent adverse drug interactions.
5. Go easy on yourself...this is a difficult time, so give yourself some slack and time to get yourself and your mood back to where you want it to be.

For more tips, talk to your chiropractor.

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