

[IMAGE]

When Medications Cause Depression

By Editorial Staff

We talked about depression earlier in this issue of *To Your Health*, specifically how resistance exercise may help reduce depression symptoms. Now let's discuss how certain medications, many of which are readily available without a prescription, can actually *increase* depression risk.

Common medications used for birth control, heartburn, allergies, pain and high blood pressure all list depression as a potential side effect, and nearly 40 percent of Americans take a least one such medication, according to the latest data published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. This is both a significant increase in the percentage of Americans using medications with depression as a potential adverse effect in the past decade *and* an increase in the percentage using three or more medications with depression as a potential side effect.

The moral to this depressing story is equally depressing: Many Americans are taking multiple medications (dubbed *polypharmacy*); many of these medications may cause depression; and some are even available without a prescription (e.g., antacids and pain relievers such as ibuprofen), making their use that much more prevalent. Talk to your doctor about the potential side effects of any medication *before* you take it, and ask whether nondrug strategies may be as effective (and safer) for the health issue you're experiencing.

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