

HEALING HABITS 2

1. If you are trying to address poor quality sleep, insomnia or disturbed sleeping patterns the following options are proven natural approaches that work. A good first option would be to take 600 mg of calcium and 400 mg of magnesium every night a couple of hours before you intend to go to sleep. Or, you could try taking 500 - 1500 mg l-tryptophan (an amino acid that helps regulate sleep) also taken 2 to 3 hours before you retire. Another way of dealing with sleep irregularities is by taking “night-time” valerian; dosages between 800 - 1600 mg are the most effective levels. This is best taken in 2 halves, the first dosage about 3 hours before bedtime and the second about half an hour before you actually go to bed. In addition to one of these 3 alternatives you could also consider burning pure lavender oil in water in your bedroom an hour or so before bedtime, so that the room is saturated with the fragrance. You could, if you prefer, put 2 or 3 drops of the pure oil directly onto your pillow case so you can breath it in as you fall to sleep. Lavender impacts significantly on the mood centre (hypothalamus) in the brain, facilitating deep relaxed states of mind, therefore inducing sleep more naturally.

2. When dealing with infections it is best to steer clear of antibiotics where possible. Antibiotics are overused in allopathic medicine and are in the main counter-productive. They are non-discriminating killers. Not only do they kill off infections they also kill off the body’s own healthy bacteria and natural flora (which is part of the body’s own protective machinery for dealing with infections and pathogenic substances). Antibiotics can wipe out the body’s own healthy flora for months making it easier to become re-infected. Therefore it is best to turn to nature’s antibiotics such as: bee pollen and grapefruit seed extract. Bee pollen is a good all-round antibiotic and can be used for most infections; 1-2 tablespoons is recommended when fighting an infection. Grapefruit seed extract (also known as citricidal) is a very powerful antibiotic, anti-fungal and anti-viral substance. It usually comes in drops which you can swallow, gargle, take as nose or ear drops (use would depend on the site of the infection). Concentrations vary significantly, so buy a high concentration product and follow dosage recommendations which may range from 20-40 drops per day. The other healthy options for all kinds of infections are the probiotics, which are beneficial bacteria that promote health. If you have had antibiotics then probiotics are essential to take afterwards to re-establish healthy flora (particularly in the digestive tract - which is the major site of beneficial bacteria). Lactobacillus acidipholus and bifidobacteria are probably the most common supplements used for fighting infection and restoring natural flora balance.

3. Nature has many answers to anxiety, depression and other negative mood states. St John’s wort is one of several phytotherapeutic remedies (natural substances derived from plant sources) that is proven to be effective in the battle against depression. Unlike prozac and other similar psychotropic drugs St John’s wort does not distort other mental or physical functionings. With most natural substances toxicity is not an issue, unless the substance is misused or abused in some way. Side effects are therefore in the main not an issue. “Daytime” valerian is also another of nature’s answers to depression and anxiety. Like St John’s wort this herb works to restore chemical imbalances in the brain, improving the individual’s capacity to cope with their negative mind state. Californian poppy, kava-kava, jamaican dogwood and passion flower are other “phytoceutical” alternatives that are effective against: stress, anxiety,

panic, paranoia, delusion and depression. If pursuing a vitamin and mineral response to depression and other forms of mental ill health, then the best combination would include: B complex, vitamin C, zinc, magnesium and manganese. These nutrients can be further enhanced when taken with tyrosine (an amino acid). There are 3 neurotransmitters (chemical messengers in the brain) that have proven to be crucial in the stress/depression/addiction/fatigue cycles. These are: adrenaline, noradrenaline and dopamine. Tyrosine is the primary ingredient responsible for the production of these neurotransmitters. So when tyrosine (which comes from animal and vegetable protein) is not available in sufficient quantity, the individual can develop severe depression, or be crippled by addictive cycles, or become plagued by mild or chronic fatigue.

Taking up to 2000 mg of tyrosine per day along with B complex, vitamin C and the minerals (particularly those already mentioned) can make a substantial difference. If this nutritional response is then coupled with the appropriate psychological support then even long term chronic depression, addiction and fatigue can be completely overturned.

4. Essential fatty acids are vital in regulating and monitoring many key functions. They produce prostaglandins which are hormone-like substances that help control heart function, the immune system, brain/mental activity, maintain water balance, promote healthy skin, build nerves and much more. There are 2 important groups amongst essential fatty acids; they are omega 3 and omega 6. The ideal diet would have equal portions of both. However, given our dietary leanings in the western/developed world, we tend to get more omega 6 and less omega 3. This is to a large extent due to the massive shift towards polyunsaturated fats (omega 6 oils) and the decline in saturated fats (omega 3 oils). Omega 6 (linoleic acid) is found in sesame and sunflower seeds as well as their oils. It is also present in evening primrose oil and borage oil, but in these oils its chemical status is slightly different and it is classified as GLA (gamma linoleic acid). If you choose to take the seeds as a way of getting adequate amounts of omega 6 then you would need at least 1 to 2 tablespoons per day. These seeds can be sprinkled on cereals, salads, or eaten by themselves. For maximum absorption seeds are best ground before eating. If taking omega 6 in GLA form then doses of 150 - 300 mg per day are required for optimum effect. The richest form of omega 3 (alpha linolenic acid) is flaxseed (also known as linseed). Either the seeds or the oil they produce are the best sources of omega 3. Due to the current imbalance between omega 6 and omega 3 oils it is probably best to have a ratio of 2 tablespoons of linseed to 1 tablespoon sesame or sunflower seeds, until you have established a balanced diet. Omega 3 oils are also found in fish oils, and in this form are known as EPA and DHA. Sardines, mackerel, salmon, are all rich in these essential fats, so too is cod liver oil. If taking omega 3 in supplement form (as EPA/DHA fish oil) dosages would start at 350 mg per day but could be as high as 3000 mg if being used therapeutically.

5. Mental health is essential if we are to fulfil our potential. Good mental health includes: unwavering concentration, a positive, happy, optimistic disposition, an efficient and reliable memory. It also includes: the ability to absorb, understand and process information, as well as the ability to express oneself in constructive, artistic and creative ways. Most of these traits and faculties decline with age or are severely impaired by doubt, fear, anxiety, stress, panic, physical ill health, psychological distress, etc. This pattern of decline and impairment can be substantially altered by a variety of natural substances that can prevent accelerated

deterioration across the spectrum of mental health. These natural substances include: lecithin, DMAE (di-methyl - amino -ethanol), pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), pyroglutamate and niacin (vitamin B3). Any one of these substances can help improve mental functioning, but the maximum benefit is secured when these nutrients are taken together. They can now be found bound together in a number of supplements often described as “smart nutrients” or “brain food”. Having said this, mental health is not all about nutrition, we also need to change our self-talk to be really mentally well. Self-talk is the constant chattering of our minds, and this mental monologue is in fact having a dialogue with every cell in our body. If our self-talk is negative then cellular activity, function and potency is adversely affected; equally if our self-talk is positive the cells’ power, potential and performance is greatly enhanced.

This is why we are actually able to heal ourselves with the power of our thoughts. Even the quite sceptical scientific community is increasingly having to accept that our thought processes and feelings impact on our physical/biological state. As a result of this realisation a whole scientific discipline has emerged called psychoneuroimmunology (the science of how thoughts affect the nervous system and immunity). The evidence gathered to date proves there is a subtle and very powerful dialogue taking place between thoughts and all vital bodily functions. Therefore it is important in order to improve mental health to combine good nutrition with healthy, positive thoughts and constructive, inspiring images. This needs to be a daily activity.

6. Nutritional supplements are not the ideal way to meet all our dietary needs; however, so-called progress has left us with little choice. Pollution of the air, water and soil, as well as various practices and treatments applied in food farming and food management, has meant a nutritional decline in all food. A typical orange 40 -50 years ago would on average have contained 180 mg of vitamin C. Today that would be rare, as averages are as little as 5 -10 mg of vitamin C per orange. We are even discovering oranges with no vitamin C at all! Therefore, because of this gradual deterioration and the unpredictable quality of our food we have to bridge the gap, otherwise we expose ourselves to disease and ill health. It is important to point out that all supplements are not the same, some have artificial substances, binders and fillers that can interfere with the potency of the nutrients, so it is best to buy quality. The following brands are the ones recognised in the nutritional industry to meet the highest standards; Higher Nature, Solgar, Quest, Bio-Care, FSC, Natures Best, Health Plus, Healthcrafts (this is not a definitive list). Remember the aim is not to have a cabinet full of supplements, a properly balanced diet underpinned by 3 or 4 very good supplements is usually all that is required. Choose and use supplements according to your needs, not as an alternative to food.

7. Food allergies are one of the biggest threats to physical and emotional health. A food allergy starts when large molecules of not completely digested food gains access to the blood stream. This migration takes place via holes in the wall of the small intestine. These holes usually exist because of parasites (like the fungal form of candida), or because of taking antibiotics, or as a result of an over-use of drugs like aspirin and other anti-inflammatories. These holes are what are commonly referred to as “leaky gut” syndrome. Another contributory factor to holes developing in the lining of the intestine is insufficient glutamine (amino acid). The intestinal lining contains the fastest growing cells in the body (every 72 hours they are completely renewed). This continual and rapid growth rate demands a lot of fuel, and glutamine is the

primary fuel for facilitating the cell replacement. Therefore without enough glutamine the gut will become leaky and one cannot be healthy with a leaky gut, because every function in the body depends on absorption of nutrients (which takes place within the digestive system). Without good absorption and healthy circulation the body's needs cannot be fully met. Therefore a major tool in addressing food allergies is to improve poor digestion by repairing the holes in the small intestine. This can be done by: 1) avoiding antibiotics and anti-inflammatories where possible. 2) By identifying those foods that trigger an allergic response (having an allergy test may be the best way to establish this). 3) Taking therapeutic doses of glutamine. Glutamine deserves further mention because it has over the last 10 years established itself as a nutrient which has an amazing impact on many vital functions in the body. Some nutritionists are now arguing that it is the ultimate nutrient because its influence is so far-reaching. Here are just some of the conditions it is helping us to address: addictions, alcoholism, bone marrow transplants, burns, cancer, cravings for stimulants, depression, digestive disorders, epilepsy, fatigue, hypoglycaemia, immunity and lymphatic repair, ME, pain, rheumatoid arthritis, schizophrenia, ulcers and wound healing, etc.

Glutamine is a tasteless substance and can be mixed with food or water without detection. The average dosage is 1-3 heaped teaspoons per day. A heaped teaspoon provides about 5 grams of glutamine which is generally sufficient as a protective or maintenance dose. In extreme cases (under medical supervision) doses as high as 8 tablespoons per day may be needed. Glutamine is sensitive to heat and acidity so do not take it with hot or acidic drinks or food. It is always best stored in the fridge. With such a wide spectrum of benefits this is certainly a nutrient worth considering when plagued by any of the above conditions. And given its preventative properties it is probably worth supplementing anyway.