

# DAY *four*

## *Natural Cure for Depression*

About 18 million Americans are diagnosed with major depressive disorders annually, and 12 million to 18 million are treated with antidepressants. Only recently has the role of homocysteine been recognized as an undesirable blood protein that affects various organs in the body. Homocysteine levels drop with the provision of folic acid and other B vitamins. A review published in the Cochrane Database indicates folic acid may be beneficial in enhancing the antidepressant effects of drugs. [Cochrane Database System Rev. 2003: CD003390] Low folic acid levels have been linked with bouts of depression. [Psychotherapy Psychosoma 72: 80-87, 2003] Low folic acid levels may be why antidepressant drugs don't always work, as they don't address the cause of the problem. [Ann Clin Psychiatry 14:33-8, 2002]

How much folic acid can a depressed person take safely? The upper limit on folic acid is nebulous. While most vitamin pills provide about 400 micrograms (4/10ths of one milligram), pregnant females are often prescribed 5000 micrograms (5 milligrams) without side effect. The only caveat is to combine folic acid with vitamin B12, another nutrient that reduces homocysteine levels, since folic acid can mask an underlying B12 deficiency. Maybe 1200 mcg of folic acid and 1000 mcg of vitamin B12

would be good for starters among depressed individuals.

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