

# Evidence-Based Mood-Lifting Supplements



The choice of natural, mood-lifting supplements are increasing every year. Many companies claim to have products and ingredients that can lead to dramatic, immediate reductions in depression and anxiety. However, it is rarely that simple. While there are numerous herbs and nutrients that can help, there are also many that have little-to-no effect. The supplements recommended in PI Therapy are chosen because they are considered safe and have a good body of evidence supporting their effectiveness. The options detailed below are only a selection and there are other good alternatives available. If you have been recommended other supplements by a health practitioner or salesperson, be sure to ask about its safety, its traditional use, and research supporting its mood-lifting effects.

## Core Supplements

**Omega-3 fish oils | High-quality B-complex | Probiotics**

Core supplements comprise the foundation of supplementation in PI Therapy. These supplements have been chosen because of their multiple positive effects on many of the biological processes associated with depression and anxiety. As a result, they are recommended to all people with depression and anxiety.

- **Omega-3 fatty acids** – there is an increasing body of evidence confirming the positive effects of omega-3 fatty acids on depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other neurological conditions. Omega-3 fats form the basic structure of our cell membranes and when these membranes consist of greater concentrations of omega-3 fats, they become more fluid and flexible. This allows easier communication between cells.
  - **Dosage:** 1000-1500mg of omega-3 a day (EPA and DHA combined). Supplements with higher levels of EPA are better for improving mood.
- **High-quality B-complex** – given the crucial roles B-vitamins play in energy, hormone, and neurotransmitter production, it is important that we have adequate levels in our body. Unfortunately, many people with mental health problems have low levels of these important vitamins. Therefore, a high-quality B-complex is included as a core supplement.
  - **Dosage:** 1 capsule/tablet daily. An activated form of B-complex may be more beneficial for some people.
- **Probiotics** – you will learn in later sessions about the crucial role our gastrointestinal system has on our brain. There is increasing research showing that probiotics can support a positive, healthy mood and likely has beneficial effects on our whole body. Therefore, taking a good-quality probiotic is recommended.
  - **Dosage:** one capsule daily, containing multiple, live bacterial strains. Some probiotics have been designed specifically for mental health.

## Second-Tier Supplements (for symptom relief)

### DEPRESSED OR LOW MOOD

**Saffron | St John's Wort | S-adenosyl-methionine (SAME) | Curcumin | Magnesium**

- **Saffron** – this spice has remarkable antidepressant and stress-lowering effects. There have been over a dozen clinical trials confirming saffron to be an effective, natural antidepressant in people suffering from mild-to-moderate depression<sup>10</sup>. There have even been several studies showing saffron to be just as effective as some pharmaceutical antidepressants.
  - **Dosage:** 15mg (or 45mg of extract equivalent), twice daily of a high-quality saffron extract.
- **St John's Wort** – *Hypericum perforatum*, otherwise known as St John's Wort, has received the most clinical support for the treatment of mild-to-moderate depression. Unfortunately, St John's Wort does interact with many medications which can make it a problem for many people.
  - **Dosage:** take according to label recommendations as dosage, quality, and potency can vary significantly.

- **S-adenosyl-methionine (SAME)** – SAME is a compound that is naturally produced in our body. It has many important roles including aiding in the production of mood-lifting neurotransmitters. SAME has good scientific support for its antidepressant effects in adults.
  - **Dosage:** 400 – 1600mg/day in divided doses.
- **Curcumin** – curcumin is a component of the spice, turmeric. Turmeric contains around 5 percent curcumin which is a powerful, natural antidepressant and antioxidant. There is also research showing curcumin's ability to improve mood in adults. It has been shown to reduce depression and anxiety in adults with mild-to-moderate depression<sup>11</sup>.
  - **Dosage:** 250 to 500mg twice daily of a highly-bioavailable form of curcumin
- **Magnesium** – given magnesium's multiple roles in the body, a deficiency in this mineral can have a negative effect on mood and mental function. There has not been a lot of good-quality research on magnesium as a treatment for depression but given its role in neurotransmitter production and its ability to lower the stress hormone, cortisol, it may be beneficial for people with depression.
  - **Dosage:** 200 to 300mg, twice daily. Avoid magnesium oxide, which is poorly absorbed in by the body.

## ANXIETY OR HIGH STRESS

### Magnesium | Saffron | Theanine | Kava | Rhodiola Rosea | Ashwagandha

- **Magnesium** – as stated above, this may be helpful for general mood.
  - **Dosage:** 200 to 400mg, twice daily. Avoid magnesium oxide.
- **Saffron** – may be helpful to lower stress and anxiety.
  - **Dosage:** 15mg (or 45mg of extract equivalent), twice daily of a high-quality saffron extract.
- **Theanine** – this is an amino acid derived primarily from green tea. It has been shown to reduce anxiety and stress levels.
  - **Dosage:** 100-200mg, twice daily.
- **Kava** – otherwise known as Piper methysticum, this plant from the Western Pacific has been shown to effectively lower anxiety.
  - **Dosage:** 1.5–3 g/day of dried rhizome in divided doses
- **Other options** - Lavender, Passionflower, Rhodiola Rosea and Ashwagandha. The latter two are particularly effective for people with comorbid low energy/ burnout.

## POOR SLEEP OR INSOMNIA

### Magnesium | Glycine | Valerian | Kava | Rhodiola Rosea | Ashwagandha

- **Magnesium** – as magnesium has a calming effect on the body, it can help support healthy sleep patterns.
  - **Dosage:** 200 to 400mg, twice daily. Take one dose, 1 hour before bedtime. Avoid magnesium oxide.
- **Glycine** – this amino acid has been shown to help improve sleep quality. It has even been shown to reduce daytime sleepiness in people suffering from poor sleep.
  - **Dosage:** 3 grams, 1 hour before bedtime. Taking with magnesium may be a good option. You can even take glycine plus magnesium glycinate (which is a form of magnesium that is bound to glycine).
- **Valerian** – in some studies, this plant has been shown to help support sleep. However, it may take some weeks to work.
  - **Dosage:** Choose a high-quality valerian extract. Take according to label recommendations.
- **Lavender** – this calming plant can help support sleep and reduce anxiety.
  - **Dosage:** Choose a high-quality valerian extract. Take according to label recommendations.

# To Treat Deficiencies

Vitamin D, zinc, iron, and high-quality protein powder may be added to your supplement regimen if you are assessed as deficient and/or your dietary intake is low. However, there is an important precaution with iron supplementation. Never supplement with iron unless you have been confirmed as deficient through blood testing. Excess iron levels can have detrimental effects.

When purchasing supplements always choose high-quality supplements from reputable companies. Where possible, choose herbal extracts that have been specifically investigated in clinical trials as quality can vary significantly. If you are uncertain, ask your health professional or a health food store/ pharmacy staff member that you can trust.

## Supplement Intake

List the supplements you are interested in taking (if any)?

### Core Supplements

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_____	_____
_____	_____

### Second-Tier Supplements (for symptom relief)

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_____	_____
_____	_____

### To Treat Deficiencies

_____	_____
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*Do you suffer from any serious medical condition and/or are you taking any medications or other supplements? If concerned, speak to your GP or healthcare practitioner first.*

Barriers to taking these supplements regularly	Solutions