

Factsheet

Natural ways to deal with Depression



Introduction

Luzia Barclay is a registered medical herbalist (DBTh MIRCH), based in Turnworth near Blandford, Dorset.

As well as appearing on BBC Radio Solent as a 'resident herbalist', Luzia is a regular tutor at Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester and Dorset Adult Education.

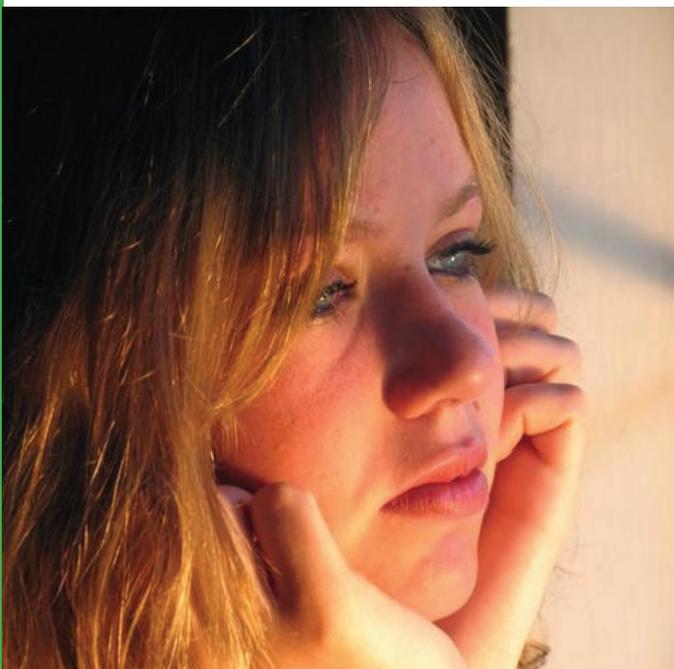
Her website: www.herbsforhealing.org.uk is a fast growing resource for those interested in the benefits of herbs and herbal medicine.

On the site you can: ● Sign-up for a workshop/course; ● Shop for organic herbal products; ● Arrange a consultation; or ● Read news and articles about herbs.

The aim of a herbalist is always to find the root cause of symptoms and to help the body to heal itself. Herbs have been used for centuries to enable this.

"By running these courses, and doing BBC radio phone-ins, I hope to prevent the knowledge from being lost," says Luzia. "We have become so used to quick fixes for everyday ailments. Sadly, these often weaken our immune systems; but there are some really effective natural alternatives."

Half-day courses and workshops are booking up fast this year. Why not find out more? Visit www.herbsforhealing.org.uk/courses for details and to sign up.



Luzia explores 7 approaches to treating depression

Depression can be debilitating. It is important to distinguish between mild and moderate, and severe depression.

Nobody knows precisely why **some** people get depressed. Depression can have many causes, including psychological, emotional and physical ones.

Before – or even instead of - turning to pharmaceutical antidepressants it is worth considering some natural alternatives.

Tackling depression: What options are there?

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1. Pharmaceutical anti-depressants



Pharmaceutical antidepressants often have **side effects** and can have just as much positive effect as a placebo. This was revealed in a “meta-study” at the beginning of this year.

Email news@herbsforhealing.org.uk for links to news articles from Feb/Mar 08 in: [New Scientist](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Times](#), [The Independent](#) and [The BBC](#).

2. Herbal remedies

Some traditional herbal remedies are well worth considering: **St John’s wort (Hypericum perforatum)** is ‘Nature’s Prozac’. It is a proven remedy for mild-to-moderate depression.



Bitter tasting plants like **milk thistle, dandelion** or **artichoke** can have a tonic effect on the liver and thus lift the moods.



Herbs like **Lemon balm** can have an uplifting effect. It has a calming effect, it eases restlessness, anxiety and lifts low spirits.



3. Light therapy

Light therapy can be helpful in cases of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Special lamps that imitate daylight help to overcome seasonal related feelings of depression.



4. Diet

People suffering from depression often **lack essential fatty acids**.

Therefore **fish oils** or **plant oils** like hempseed oil can be helpful, also plenty of nuts and seeds. In general, changing the diet to a healthy, well-balanced one with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables is very important.



Fresh and raw fruit and vegetables contain **live enzymes**, they induce a feeling of being ‘alive’ and full of energy.

Another important aspect of treating depression with diet is the maintenance of a stable even blood sugar level. Fluctuating blood sugar levels caused by consuming too much sugar and refined carbohydrates lead to fluctuating moods and feelings of ‘low’ and depression. Wholemeal foods help to keep moods positive and even.



Tackling depression: What options are there?

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5. Counselling

Counselling and/or other psychological therapy can be especially helpful when the cause is related to emotional/psychological issues. Try to step back and reflect on what you do and how you live. Are you happy with your work? with the people you surround yourself? how and where you live?



6. Exercise

Exercise can be surprisingly effective in overcoming depression. During exercise we take in plenty of oxygen and the body produces more mood-enhancing substances like endorphins and phenylethylamine. Exercise may have many other additional effects: improving the way you look and boosting self-esteem. It gives you something positive to focus on, and it will lead to general

wellbeing. Try 45 minutes of moderate exercise 3 times per week. Even walking for 10-15 minutes can make you feel better.

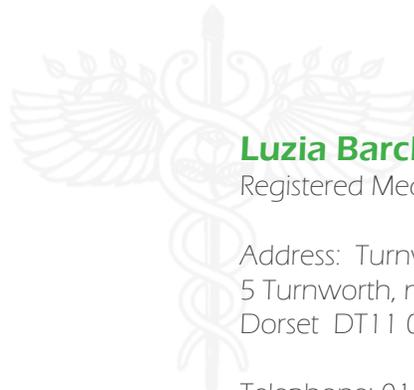


7. Yoga

Yoga practice can help to balance body, mind and emotions to restore a sense of wellbeing and contentment - through breathing exercises particularly. Yoga postures stimulate glands and organs, and improve circulation. The stretching and strengthening movements flush toxins from the body.



- For more information about any of the points made in this factsheet, or to sign up for a half-day course or workshop please visit www.herbsforhealing.org.uk, or call Luzia Barclay, registered medical herbalist, on 01258 456223.



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