



# MoodNews

UPDATES FROM THE MOOD TREATMENT CENTER | WINTER 2016

## Food Matters

### *Flavanols and the Brain*

What do berries, dark chocolate, tea, apples, citrus, and almonds have in common? They are rich in *flavanol*, an antioxidant that's made news this year in the research on brain health. Here's a recap of those headlines:

*Tea prevents depression.* Three cups of tea a day lowers the risk of depression by 37%, and six daily

## Treatment Breakthroughs

People with mood disorders can expect a full recovery. Below are new options for those still in the struggle:

### Medication

Guanfacine for cognition in schizophrenia.

Topiramate for marijuana cravings, and combined alcohol-sugar cravings.

Nuedexta for agitation in dementia. Research also suggests it may help bipolar depression.

### Natural

NAC reduces alcohol, marijuana and nicotine use, as well as self-harm and skin-picking.

CocoaVia flavanols for memory.

Blueberry-based supplement prevents post-partum depression.

Folinic acid for autism.

Melatonin with zinc and magnesium for insomnia in older adults.

Light therapy for sex drive.

### Therapy

*Hyperthermia* (heating and cooling the body) for rapid relief of depression.

cups nearly doubles that benefit. It's the tea leaf that matters. Both green and black teas are rich in flavanols, but herbal teas won't have that effect. Coffee also lowers the depression risk, but unlike tea its benefits max out at 2.5 metric cups a day – any more seems to increase the risk of depression. Other studies suggest that tea can prevent dementia.

### *Citrus and berries help depression and memory.*

Regular intake of citrus fruits and berries can also prevent depression as well as age-related memory loss. The "dose" of those foods is a cup of berries a week or a glass of orange juice a day.

*Dark chocolate reverses age-related memory loss.* The Mars company extracted the flavanols from dark chocolate in a product called *Cocoa Via*. It brought the average memory of 65 year olds down to that of 35 year olds after a few months. It also strengthened the brain's memory center (the *hippocampus*). Eating dark chocolate has similar brain benefits, but isn't as intense. You would need to eat 30 ounces a day to equal

the flavanols in *CocoaVia*, and it's consuming more than 1 ounce/day is probably not a good idea.

Flavanols can also prevent heart disease and stroke.



"I got nasty habits; I take tea at three." —Mick Jagger

Two words of warning: Sleep disruption can worsen mood, so avoid caffeine after 2 P.M. (that's right, Mick Jagger, your habit of tea at 3 P.M. is stretching it). In terms of caffeine, 1 cup of coffee = 2 cups of tea = 3 ounces of dark chocolate. If you're prone to kidney stones, consume dark chocolate, tea, and nuts in moderation and take with plenty of water.

## Treating Depression Extends Life

If you take a psychiatric medication, you probably have some concerns about what it's doing to your health. All come with risks and benefits, and we hope the benefits will

outweigh the risks. A new study of over 10 million people lends some reassurance: People who took medications for mood lived longer than those who didn't. Some of the treatments with the most serious health risks, such as quetiapine (Seroquel), actually had the greatest effect in prolonging life.

People with schizophrenia and ADHD also live longer when they take the *right* medication. This benefit on lifespan *did not* hold up if the dose was too low or too high, the medication was not effective, or treatment was started too late.

*Treating mental health problems helps people live longer.* The story that emerges from this research is not that psychiatric medications are good for you like vitamins. It's that a healthy brain is a key to a long life.

It's the brain, after all, that tells the body what to do, sending neurohormones to guide everything from digestion to heart rate. Mood disorders worsen health by disrupting those neurohormones. When people recover, they have lower rates of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and lung disease.

Psychiatric medications can also bring direct health benefits. Lithium reduces aging (by protecting *telomeres* in the genes) and lowers the risk of all cancers by 25%. It also reduces risks of dementia, stroke, heart disease, infection, and neurologic illnesses. Antidepressants play a role in brain repair and prevent some of the damage to the brain after a stroke.

[www.moodtreatmentcenter.com](http://www.moodtreatmentcenter.com)

## For Teens of Bipolar Parents

We are part of a national study to help identify early signs of bipolar. If you have that diagnosis, but your children do not, they may be eligible to participate (they can have other conditions besides bipolar). The study does not involve active treatment, though participants can use mental health treatments freely as they need to while enrolled. Ask us about the study or inquire online:

[moodtreatmentcenter.com/study.htm](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com/study.htm)

## Natural Sleep Online

It's not easy to do therapy online, but there's one type that works almost as well in person as it does through the internet. It's called *cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia* (CBT-i), and it improves sleep even better than the strongest sleep medicine (Ambien). Beyond its benefits for sleep, CBT-i also doubles the response to antidepressants.

CBT-i works by helping people overcome forces that impede sleep, like anxiety, and maximize their internal sleep mechanisms: *sleep drive* and *circadian rhythm*. People learn how to adjust their bedtime routines depending on their sleep.

There are three ways to get CBT-i:

- 1) Paper and pencil version:  
[moodtreatmentcenter.com/cbtinsomnia.pdf](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com/cbtinsomnia.pdf)
- 2) Free app: *CBT-i Coach*
- 3) Interactive, online version:  
[www.myshuti.com](http://www.myshuti.com)

## Practice News

**Clemmons Office.** We are opening a Clemmons branch in early 2017 at the corner of Lewisville-Clemmons and Peace Haven roads. The following providers will see clients there (they'll also keep hours at their current locations): Chris Aiken, Ben Bentley, Cheryl Goldberg, Jessica Phipps, Jeff Rinehart, and Sophia Yuan.

### **New therapist: Kristen Bock, LPC, LCAS**

Kristen brings a broad array of skills to our center, including cognitive behavioral therapy and therapy for trauma, mood disorders, and addictions. She completed her master's at Appalachian State, with certificates in Addictions Counseling and Expressive Arts Therapy. In her free time, Kristen enjoys hiking, bike riding, traveling, reading, practicing Tai Chi, and spending time with family.

**Book Release.** Dr. Aiken's new self-help book, *Bipolar, Not So Much*, will be released by W.W. Norton in 2017. The book focuses on natural and lifestyle approaches to depression and bipolar. If you purchase a copy at our office we will donate the profits to Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA).

**Educational Seminars.** Our small groups teach stress-reduction skills to prevent mood and anxiety problems. Future offerings include Mindfulness, Mindfulness for Teens, Aging Mindfully, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). To reserve your spot, contact [maddie@moodtreatmentcenter.com](mailto:maddie@moodtreatmentcenter.com).

**Spread the Hope.** Every day we see remarkable recoveries in people who thought they had no hope of feeling better. If you have a story of recovery, consider sharing it anonymously – ask us about our new *Hope Book*.

We partnered with this online site because their version was proven to work. Use the discount code MOODCTR-NC when signing up (we don't receive income from this code).

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