

L-Methylfolate

L-methylfolate (Deplin, MethylPro) is a folate vitamin that has unique effects on the brain, where it is used to help produce neurotransmitters involved in mood (serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine). Up to 70% of people with depression have limited abilities to produce this vitamin.

L-methylfolate is not an antidepressant; it is a vitamin that provides necessary dietary support so you can respond more fully to an antidepressant. L-methylfolate treats many kinds of depression and has been found particularly effective in people with depression who are overweight (BMI > 30). Its overall effect is about equal to the effect we see with antidepressants (as measured by the effect size in research studies).

There are several reasons why your body may not produce enough L-methylfolate:

Genetic: a gene called MTHFR c-677t can prevent the body from turning folate into L-methylfolate. It occurs in 10-12% of the population and is more common in people of Mediterranean or Hispanic descent.

Age: L-methylfolate levels decrease with age.

Illness: diabetes, atrophic gastritis, Crohn's, colitis, renal failure and hypothyroidism.

Lifestyle: smoking, excessive alcohol and poor nutrition can lower L-methylfolate.

Medications: certain seizure medicines (e.g. phenytoin, carbamazepine, primidone, phenobarbital, lamotrigine, valproate),

methotrexate, sulphasalazine, oral contraceptives, metformin, fluoxetine, niacin, fenofibrates and warfarin can lower L-methylfolate.

How To Take It

L-methylfolate can be taken morning or night, with or without food. The benefits usually take effect within 2-4 weeks.

Important: do not take regular folate (or folic acid) supplements with L-methylfolate, as they can prevent its absorption in the brain. Check your multivitamin to see if it contains folate.

Cost and Insurance Coverage

Most insurers do not cover L-methylfolate, but it is very affordable (\$10-15/month) over the counter.

We keep updated links to the best product for the price at:

www.moodtreatmentcenter.com/products

What about folic acid? Several controlled trials have found that folic acid (folate) makes antidepressants work better, but it did not work in several studies and does not seem as effective as L-methylfolate. Folic acid can also impair lamotrigine (lamictal), and should not be taken if you are on L-methylfolate.

Side Effects

96% of people find L-methylfolate very tolerable, and it has been found to reduce the side effects to antidepressants. L-methylfolate had the same rate of side effects as a sugar pill, and was not associated with weight gain, fatigue, insomnia, or sexual dysfunction.

—Chris Aiken, M.D., updated 2/23/2021