

Integrative Approach to Depression  
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**Diagnosis:**

- Screen with “SIG E CAPS” Sleep/ Interest / Guilt/ Energy/ Concentration/ Appetite/ Psychomotor/ Suicide.
- PHQ -2 (in eCW): Little Interest or Pleasure in doing things? 2) Feel down, depressed, or hopeless? (None/ Several/ Most than half the days/ Nearly q day)

Consider testing: First line: CBC, TSH.  
Second line: Fe, Folic Acid, B12, total T3, reverse T3.

**Integrative History Pearls:**

- **Nutrition** -- \*Quick tool: **What did you have for breakfast/ lunch/ dinner?** Apply Michael Pollan wisdom: Is it FOOD? Not too much? Mostly plants (or as close to nature as possible?) \_If not, probably room for tweaking. Refer to IM!
- **Exercise** -- \*Quick tool: **Are you moving your body > 150 minutes per week?**  
**Optimal BMI?** If not, probably room for tweaking. Refer to IM!
- **Sleep** -- \*Quick tool: Do you wake up refreshed and energized for the whole day after sleeping? If not, start addressing sleep issues, or refer to IM clinic...
- **Support** – \*Quick tool: Who do you turn to when things get tough?  
Can immediately name 1-2 CLOSE people. If not, explore options for counseling.

**Agents to consider for normal brain NT biosynthesis:**

- B Complex- B-50 complex once daily is usually adequate. (Do not exceed 100 mg Vit B6 due to case reports of iatrogenic neuropathy)
- Fish Oil = 1000 to 2000 mg EPA + DHA\* (often regular fish oil capsules only 30% EPA + DHA combo)
- Vitamin D3 – 1000 – 2000 IU/day

**Therapeutic agents\* (not recommended to use if patient is already on anti-depressant therapy)**

\*SEE WHAT IS YOUR BRAIN TYPE? Handout for specifics on NT types

- Low serotonin: 5-HTP 150 – 400, or even up to 800 mg qhs.
- St John’s Wort – Standardized to 0.3% hypericin, 300 mg tid. \*Watch out for significant drug-herb interactions!
- Low catecholamines: L-Tyrosine 500mg 1-3 on arising and midmorning
- Natural tranquilizer: L-theanine 50- 150 mg qd –bid
- \*Covers all the NT bases!: SAM-eStart 200mg QD- BID (but \$\$\$)

**Lifestyle approaches**

- Exercise – Move!
- Counseling, mind-body therapies
- Mediterranean Diet
- Phototherapy (if significant Seasonal Affective D/O present)
- Pet therapy!