

IS IT TIME TO DOSE UP ON "SUNSHINE" FOODS?



HEALTHY EATING

We know that what we eat can have a huge effect on our mood and general wellbeing – whether it's down to the actual nutrients we're ingesting, or the psychological effects, is still a topic for scientific debate.

So, if the winter blues have you mindlessly reaching for stodgy carbohydrates, then here are some foods you might want to try.

Cut down on food 'stressors' such as caffeine, alcohol and saturated fats, and increase the amount of 'supports' including water, fruit and vegetables and oily fish.



01

Bananas contain tryptophan, an amino acid which manufactures the 'happy' chemical, serotonin.



02

Mashed potato is a good source of stress-combating vitamins B and C to fight off winter ailments. Make it with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk and go easy on the salt.



03



High quality **chocolate** is a good source of iron, antioxidants tryptophan, polyphenols. Go for 70% dark chocolate as there is less sugar than milk chocolate.

04



St John's Wort is a popular herbal remedy for winter blues, but another effective way to lift spirits is to use flower essences.

05

Eat a hot curry which contains warming spices with healing properties and endorphin releasing chillies.



06

Make ginger tea. Ginger is a traditional cold remedy as it contains many antioxidants.



The sunshine supplement

Did you know that the UK government advises everyone to take a supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 international units) of vitamin D a day during autumn and winter? This is because we can't make vitamin D from sunlight at this time of year and vitamin D helps regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body for healthy bones, teeth, and muscles.

There are also studies which have shown a link between vitamin D deficiency and depression. When conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis, researchers noticed that study participants with depression also had low vitamin D levels.

The same analysis found that, statistically, people with low vitamin D were at a much greater risk of depression. The researchers believe that because vitamin D is important to healthy brain function, insufficient nutrient levels may play a role in depression and other mental illnesses.

