

# 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.

