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Protect Your Health From Daily Exposure to Dangerous Toxins

By Gary Greenberg

Despite amazing advances in medicine, we seem to keep getting sicker as a nation. A growing body of experts places much of the blame for this paradox on environmental toxins that are constantly assaulting our bodies.

“The polluted environment is an invisible threat that is with us all of the time,” says Rolf Halden, director of the Biodesign Center for Environmental Health Engineering at Arizona State University in Tempe. “When we analyze babies’ cord blood at birth, we see that they are already loaded with the chemicals we have mass produced and distributed around the globe.”

The most troubling of these pollutants are synthetic chemicals and heavy metals, which interfere with cellular function, contributing to heart disease, cancer, dementia, diabetes, COPD, autoimmune conditions, and other chronic ailments. Yet these toxins don’t seem to register as a critical health threat to the general population, or even to many doctors.

“We know that the air, soil, and

water are polluted, and that the food is not pure, but we somehow believe this stuff is not affecting our bodies,” says Halden. “The imaginary border we’ve created between the environment and us doesn’t exist. We are soaking up this chemistry, and the result is we’re just not as healthy as we used to be.”

In the medical community, debate swirls around how much of these toxic substances the body can absorb before suffering substantial harm.

“We originally thought that the dose was the poison,” says Dr. Leonardo Trasande, a professor of pediatrics and environmental health at New York University Langone Health. “That’s still commonly taught in toxicology courses and medical schools. [But] thousands of studies suggest low levels of these toxic substances can disrupt natural functions.”

Synthetic Chemicals

We’re now exposed to nearly 80,000 chemicals used in industry, most which haven’t been tested for safety. And there is a frightening and dangerous synergy between them.

“It’s likely that the effects of these

6 Supplements to Beat Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults over the age of 18, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA). And it's not uncommon for people who suffer from anxiety disorders to also suffer from depression. Experts say these conditions are highly treatable, but only 36 percent of sufferers seek appropriate treatment. For traditional physicians, the first approach in dealing with depression is often pharmaceutical, which can lead to potentially dangerous side effects, say experts.

"Antidepressants are among the world's most widely prescribed medications. They are routinely given to patients to combat depression, anxiety, insomnia, eating disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder," Dr. David Friedman, bestselling author of "Food Sanity, How to Eat in a World of Fads and Fiction," tells *Health Radar*.

"Unfortunately, the side effects of SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) antidepressants often outweigh their benefits," he says. Side effects include weight gain, insomnia, loss of libido, skin rashes, headaches, joint and muscle pain, stomach upset, nausea, and diarrhea.

"But the worst side effect is suicidal thoughts and behavior," says Friedman, who is board-certified in integrative medicine. "Combating depression with a drug that makes you have suicidal

thoughts is like trying to put out a fire with gasoline."

For people suffering from a serious chemical imbalance, antidepressant drugs monitored by a doctor offer benefits, Friedman tells *Health Radar*. "But for those suffering from minor depression, there are much safer, natural alternatives you can try," he says.

Here are some examples:

1. S-adenosyl-L-methionine (SAME). One benefit of this natural antidepressant discovered in the early 1950s is that it helps with the production of serotonin, an important neurotransmitter that carries signals from the brain to the rest of the body. SAME also helps to increase levels of dopamine, the "feel-good" neurotransmitter, and norepinephrine, the anti-stress hormone. Recommended starting dose is 200 milligrams, twice daily.

2. Turmeric. Curcumin, the active compound found in turmeric, is effective for combating depression and anxiety. "Curcumin has been found to be as effective for depression as the popular SSRI, Prozac," says Friedman. Be careful to use capsules, powders, or tablets that tell you how much curcumin they contain, and follow the recommended dosage on the label.

3. Hemp oil. Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum, senior author of a chapter on mental health and nutrition in the "Krause's Food & the Nutrition Care Process," tells *Health Radar* that hemp oil without THC has been "remarkably effective for people

suffering from anxiety and depression." Teitelbaum warns that quality control is "pretty iffy" in many hemp oil products, but recommends Hemp Select capsules, taking two or three capsules daily to ward off anxiety.

4. Magnesium and zinc. Low serum levels of zinc predispose people to depression, and taking supplements helps improve dopamine transmission, says Teitelbaum. Magnesium has been shown to reduce symptoms of depression in several clinical trials. He recommends 300 mg of magnesium and 15 mg of zinc daily.

5. 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP). This compound is a precursor to the neurotransmitter serotonin, which produces "feel-good" chemicals in the brain. In addition to depression, 5-HTP has been used to treat sleep disorders, ADHD, premenstrual syndrome, and Parkinson's disease. In most studies, 150-800 mg daily of 5-HTP was taken.

6. Saffron. This spice has been used for centuries to improve mood and increase relaxation. A 2013 study published in the *Journal of Integrative Medicine* found that saffron supplements reduced symptoms of major depression better than a placebo. In fact, saffron has been found to be just as effective as conventional antidepressant drugs, says Friedman. One study, published in *Phytotherapy Research* found 30 mg daily of the spice to be effective at reducing depression. □