

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **Depression Primer**
- **Treatment without drugs**
- **Moose Chili**
- **Winter Trails Day!**
- **Heart Month!**
- **Control Hypertension**

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Depression: The Basics

Depression is a complex condition that is not only prevalent across the US, but also often undiagnosed due to the nature of the condition and the stigma that often surrounds it. Depression is complicated because it can vary in severity, can be a symptom of other conditions, as well as lead to a number of ailments that, on the surface, don't seem to be related to mental health. The first thing that should be noted is that depression is a real condition and those suffering

from it are not able to simply "snap out of it" just by changing their attitudes. Statistics on depression are tricky because they come from such a wide variety of sources, but according to the Centers for Disease Control, it affects 1 in 10 US adults. Other sources say it's 1 in 4. While I could not find current statistics for Alaska, when looking at usage rates of prescription drugs on Alaskan group health plans, antidepressants are always among the most common types of drugs being used in any given group. Depression and stress have also been shown to be the most costly health risk factors in terms of health claims, making them a big concern not only to individuals but also to employers.

What is depression? Depression occurs when you have five or more of the following symptoms at the same

time, either daily, or nearly daily for at least two weeks:

- Persistent sad or irritable mood
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, & remembering; indecisiveness
- Insomnia or hypersomnia (excessive sleeping) almost every day;
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in activities you once enjoyed
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Sense of restlessness or being slowed down
- Significant weight loss or gain (a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month).

People experiencing depression will have different sets of symptoms at varying levels of severity.

What causes it? Certain medical conditions can trigger bouts of depression – including diabetes, sleep apnea, thyroid disorder, heart disease, chronic infection, and hormonal imbalance, to name a few– and those conditions should be addressed in order to effectively treat the depression. Some medications can also lead to depression. The

actual cause of depression is not always clear. Dr. Stephen Ilardi, PhD, a depression specialist, researcher, and author of the book "The Depression Cure," says that a key discovery is that a prime trigger for depression is the brain's runaway stress response. Here's a somewhat simplified explanation: In earlier times, stress signaled the immediate need for vigorous physical activity (hence the term "fight or flight") – the brain still reacts this way, causing a series of physical reactions that quickly prepare the body for an intense burst of action. Once that burst of physical activity occurs, the stress circuitry in the brain is signaled to shut off the stress response. Consider two truths about modern living – most people are under a constant barrage of stress in one form or another and our society has gotten more and more sedentary than ever thanks to technology and modern-day conveniences. In effect, the brain and body can end up in a near-constant state of stress response. A variety of factors make a person more prone to depression: genetics, death or loss, conflict, abuse, major events, serious illness, certain medications, substance abuse, and other personal problems, particularly social or mental health issues.

Sources: WebMD, *The Depression Cure*, National Alliance on Mental Illness



Imagine your favorite forbidden food—maybe it's a fudgy brownie ala mode...go ahead, close your eyes, smell the rich chocolate; now, take a bite, feel the warm, gooey brownie melt in your mouth, taste the sweet cocoa and vanilla, and swallow...welcome to the latest tool in the battle against cravings! A new study by Carnegie Mellon University researchers shows that when you imagine eating a certain

Creative Way to Control Cravings

food, it reduces your actual consumption of that food. It goes against the old assumption that trying to suppress thoughts of desired foods can curb cravings for those foods. In fact, they found quite the opposite to be true. It wasn't enough for the subjects in the study to just think about the food - they actually had to imagine the act of eating the food in question. The theory as to why this works has to do with visual imagery "tricking" the brain and acting

as a substitute for the behavior itself. The implication this has in therapies to reducing cravings for unhealthy foods, drugs, or cigarettes is pretty exciting. While visualization may not completely stop you from sabotaging your diet, it definitely has a chance of reducing the amount of those forbidden foods in which you indulge. Enjoy!

Source: www.cmu.edu (Carnegie Mellon University)

Treating Depression Without Drugs



“Depression is not sobbing and crying and giving vent, it is plain and simple reduction of feeling.”

*-Judith Guest,
Author of *Ordinary People**



Obstacles to getting treated for depression are often related to lack of health plan coverage, the stigma associated with the condition, a feeling that the person should be able to deal with it on their own, and the difficulty of diagnosis - it sure would be great if there were a simple blood test. The two traditional forms of treatment for depression are medication (anti-depressants) and talk-therapy or counseling. Many people find good results by using a combination of the two. While these forms of treatment are important and very useful for many people, they don't work for everyone. In fact, recent studies have shown that antidepressants are only effective as a long-term cure in about 25-30% of cases. It should be noted, however, that in the most severe cases, antidepressants and counseling are generally the most effective treatment.

Dr. Stephen Ilardi, PhD (The Depression Cure) outlines an alternative (or complementary) six-step program of treatment that he calls Therapeutic Lifestyle Change, or TLC. Detailed in his book, each of the six steps is equally important and all must be done in order to get optimal results. The great thing about this program is that everyone can benefit from following this program, whether

they have depression or not. The six steps are:



1. **Enhanced Nutrition** (specifically Omega-3, vitamin D, daily multivitamin, vitamin C, Evening Primrose Oil)
2. **Exercise** – minimum of 35 minutes of aerobic exercise 3 days a week, preferably more.
3. **Anti-rumination** – Ruminating is the act of going over and over something in your head, particularly negative things and is very common among those experiencing depression – practicing mindfulness, deep breathing, making a gratitude or pleasure list, doing something creative (i.e. drawing, knitting, crafts, etc) are all methods of anti-rumination.

4. **Light Therapy** – especially important in the winter months, using a high quality light of 10,000 luxes or more for 10-30 minutes every morning, can enhance mood, help with sleep problems, and improve energy.
5. **Social Interaction** – establish a person or people with whom you can talk openly, find a connection, and do meaningful activity.
6. **Sleep Hygiene** – get 7-9 hours of sleep each night – addressing sleep issues is a key step in treating depression and can be done by using your bed only for sleeping, setting consistent sleep and wake times, avoiding naps, avoiding bright lights in bed, avoiding caffeine and other stimulants, turning down the thermostat at night, and developing a bedtime ritual.

These steps may seem obvious, but for a person in the throws of depression, they are not and it can be a challenging, yet effective, program to follow. Of course, if you are experiencing depression, the first step is to talk to your health care provider to determine the best course of treatment and also to rule out other potential health conditions.

Source: *The Depression Cure*; presentation by Diane Sieg, RN, CYT, CSP



Quick Comparison:

3 oz Sirloin Strip
180 calories,
8 grams of fat (3g saturated)
9% recommended daily iron

3 oz Moose Steak
114 calories
1 gram of fat (0 saturated)
20% recommended daily iron

Moose Harvest Chili

I came up with this recipe by using bits and pieces of other chili recipes that sounded good and by trying to use up certain things in my pantry or fridge that needed to get used. I encourage experimentation with this as there are endless possibilities. This version is not spicy, but add some crushed red pepper and voila!

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 lb ground moose meat | 2 large cloves of garlic, minced |
| 1 shallot, chopped | 1 can tomato soup (i.e. Campbells) |
| 1/2 medium onion (or more) | 1 1/2 cans water (using the empty soup can) |
| 3 cans chili beans (or any combo of kidney, black, or Pinto beans) drained and rinsed | 1 tsp dried oregano |
| 5 plum (aka Roma) tomatoes | 1/4 tsp black pepper |
| 1 small can green chilies | 1 tsp ground cumin |
| 1 small to medium zucchini, chopped | 2 tsp sea salt |
| 1 cup chopped fresh pumpkin (or butternut squash) | 1 1/2 Tbsp chili powder |
| | 2-3 Tbsp brown sugar |
| | 1/3 tsp ground cloves |

Brown moose burger with onions (shallot and regular) in a large skillet. Combine moose mixture with all the other ingredients, stirring frequently as you add things, in a large crock pot. Stir to combine and turn on low for the day. Enjoy with cornbread on a cold winter day! The following is based on this creating 6 servings - but they are probably large servings!

Calories 954; Fat 5.7g (sat 0.9g); Protein 73.6g; Carb 159.1g; Dietary Fiber 39.9g; Sugars 26.7g; Chol 66mg; Iron 19mg; Sodium 982mg; Calc 290mg. Source: nutritional analysis from caloriecount.com; recipe by Cara Fairbanks

Calendar of Upcoming Active Events:



ANCHORAGE/VALLEY IN FEBRUARY

Wednesdays - Run or walk with friends! Meet at Westchester Lagoon to walk or run for 1 hour on the coastal trail. 6 PM (www.anchoragerunningclub.org)

Ongoing: Anchorage has many trails, parks, rinks and frozen lakes perfect for walking, skiing, sledding, and ice skating in the winter. Check out conditions and a listing of locations at <http://www.muni.org/iceimages/parks/RinkTrailsStatus.pdf>

Feb 4-6 Winterfest (Alyeska), snowshoe & cross-country ski tours, kids fun races, and motorized sled rides; fireworks too!

Feb 5 Spinning for Health Care—Project Access, 5th Ave Mall, cycle for charity, <http://anchorageprojectaccess.org/event/>

Feb 5 Blood Bank of AK, Give blood, save a life. 11AM to 3PM, REI, Free.

Feb 5 Waxing 101, REI, 11AM, FREE demo

Feb 6 Ski for Women, Kincaid Park, 9AM-1 PM, multiple events for all ages, fun & costumes, silent auction, registration online or at REI on 2/3. www.anchoragenordicski.com/skiforwomen/index.html

Feb 8 Snowboarding 101, REI, 6PM, FREE, equipment, basic technique, terminology, basic tips

Feb 9 GPS 101, Getting Started, 6PM, REI, Free

Feb 12 Winter Trails Day, Campbell Creek Science Ctr. FREE event for all. Free gear use, Ski & snowshoe clinics, sled dog races, snow shelter tours, demos, educational talks, more! Family friendly. 10:00 AM-4:00 PM www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html for more info

Feb 15 Intro to Snowshoeing, REI, 6PM, FREE

Feb 16 GPS 201, Beyond the basics, REI, 6 PM, FREE

Feb 19 River Walk for Justice, 8:30 AM H2Oasis, fund raiser for Victims for Justice www.victimsforjustice.org

Feb 19 Susitna Challenge, Little Su 50K & Susitna 100, Run, bike, or ski, 8 AM Pt. MacKenzie General Store, out & back, www.susitna100.com

Feb 22 Avalanche Info, 6PM, REI, FREE, Learn how to avoid getting caught in an avalanche

Feb 25-27 Telepalooza, annual celebration of telemark skiing, many events and activities.

Feb 26 Frostbite Footrace (5K) & Fun Run (2.5K) (Fur Rondy) 9:30 AM, Glacier Brewhouse. Family event.

Info at www.furrondy.net/content/view/134/162/

Feb 24 Intermediate Ski Waxing, 6PM, REI, FREE

Feb 26 Ski 4 Kids - 9:30 AM Kincaid Park. More info at www.anchoragenordicski.com/Events/ski4kids.htm

Mar 1 Gold Nugget Triathlon Registration Opens, Fills up fast! www.goldnuggettriathlon.com

FAIRBANKS IN FEBRUARY

Mondays: Pool Kayak Sessions, 7-9 PM, Kayak Polo 9-9:30PM \$3.75 per session. Boats must be clean, bring helmet for polo. Info at www.fairbankspaddlers.org. (Runs thru May)

Wednesdays: Fahrenheit be darned winter training runs, 5:30 PM, Patty Center, www.runningclubnorth.org

Sundays: Winter Bike Rides - Meet at Ivory Jacks ready to ride at Noon. Info at www.fairbankscycleclub.org

Fridays: Friday night wax clinics at Beaver Sports, 6 PM

Feb 5 Ballaine Ridge Snowshoe Trail Run, Noon, 834 Goldfinch, 3, 6, & 9K, www.runningclubnorth.org

Feb 12 Snow Run, 11 AM, Bus Shelter across from Patty Ctr, 4.1mi, flat, 7.2 mi hilly, www.runningclubnorth.org

Feb 19 Fairbanks Snowshoe Classic Noon. UAF west ridge ski hut. 5K and 10K, extra snowshoes avail. \$15 entry fee. www.runningclubnorth.org

Feb 26 Jamestown Fun Run, 11 AM, Ballaine hill pull-out (N side) 5K, flat, on mushing trails, FREE, cookies and prizes after. Contact Kat Betters 457-2936

AROUND AK IN FEBRUARY

Feb 5 Frostbite 5K (WILLOW), 10 AM Willow Community Center, 3-5K depending on conditions, \$20 fee, Willow Running Club, www.facebook.com/pages/willow-race-series/184655271570

Feb 19 Rock Climb to Benefit HOWL, 9AM-5PM, Bay Club in HOMER, Fun-raiser for Homer Wilderness Leaders. All ages, prizes and door prizes. \$25 registration; www.homerwildernessleaders.com

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

- Albert Einstein

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Please note: This newsletter and all its contents are for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice or professional tax advice.

FEBRUARY is HEART MONTH - Know Your Numbers to Know Your Heart Health!

The Alaska Health Fair is a non-profit organization dedicated to a mission of promoting statewide health education and medical screenings. They provide opportunities for Alaskans to participate in health fairs, both at worksites and in the community. These health fairs offer high quality, affordable medical screenings. All fairs are staffed by trained volunteers. They offer comprehensive blood tests for \$45 (**fast for 12 hours prior**), Thyroid blood test for \$30, Prostate blood test for \$25, A1C blood test for \$25, and a Vitamin D blood test for \$50. **Upcoming community fairs are listed below - please go to the website at www.alaskahealthfair.org for the latest dates, times and locations. Or you can call AK Health Fair at (907)278-0234.**

Feb 5 - Rogers Park Community Health Fair, 1st Christian Church 3010 La Touche, **Anchorage**, 9 AM-Noon

Feb 5 - Bethel Community Health Fair, Yuit Piciryarait Cultural Center, Blood draws 9 AM-Noon, health fair until 4 PM

Feb 16 - Kenai Peninsula College Community Health Fair, 156 College Rd, **Soldotna**, blood draws 9am-Noon, health fair till 4pm

Feb 19 - Mt View Community Health Fair, Boys & Girls Club, 315 Price St., **Anchorage**, 8AM-Noon, Specialized fair for those with language barriers in several languages. Interpreters will be available for Spanish, Hmong, Samoan, and Tagalog, and possibly others.

March 5 - Tyson Community Health Fair, 8AM-Noon, Tyson Elementary 2801 Richmond

March 19 - Northway Mall Community Health Fair, **Anchorage**, 8AM-Noon, special activities for children as well

March 19 - Ninilchik Community Health Fair, 9 AM - Noon, Kenai Peninsula State Fairgrounds (mile 136.5 Sterling hwy)

March 19 - Gustavus Community Health Fair, 8AM-Noon, Gustavus School

March 26 - Dimond Center mall Community Health Fair, 9AM-Noon, **Anchorage**

March 30 - Nenana Health Fair, Nenana School, 7-9 AM, as health/safety education continues until 1:00 PM

February 4: Go Red for Women Breakfast & Seminar: *Eating on the Run - Which Road to Take?*

In honor of Heart Month, Alaska Regional Hospital is hosting this heart healthy breakfast and seminar presented by dietician Young Fisher. Learn how to prepare quick and easy combos that fulfill your nutrition requirements and get ideas for making your own "fast food."

Coming soon:

April 30th - 2011 Anchorage Heart Run. Walk or run in timed or non-timed events. This is the largest foot race in Alaska and helps raise funds for research and education, engages all participants in heart-healthy fitness, and is a great way to celebrate spring! The University of Alaska Anchorage will host the run, which starts at the UAA Arts Bldg parking lot at 9 AM. They expect over 7,500 runners/walkers and volunteers. Registration is open on the event website at www.heartrun.com. This is also a great way to honor loved ones who are living with or who have succumbed to heart disease. Take it a step further and get a team together to make it a group event!

10 Tips for Controlling Hypertension

1. Know your blood pressure. Have it checked regularly.
2. Know what your weight should be. Keep it at or below that level.
3. Don't use too much salt in cooking or at meals. Avoid salty foods.
4. Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber foods.
5. Limit alcohol intake. Don't have more than one drink a day if you're a woman or two a day if you're a man.
6. Take your medicine exactly as prescribed. Don't run out of pills even for a single day.
7. Keep appointments with the doctor.
8. Follow your doctor's advice about physical activity.
9. Make certain the people you care about understand their risks of developing high blood pressure.
10. Know that every step counts in managing your blood pressure.

Source: American Heart Association