Going Natural

Considering alternative treatments for depression and anxiety

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The effectiveness of some antidepressant drugs has recently been called into question by scientists. As a result, many people are exploring non-pharmaceutical solutions to treat mild mental health disorders. But do complementary and alternative medicines work?

Data show that some naturally occurring fats found in fish oil can trigger an antidepressant response.

Some physical activities like rigorous workouts and cardiovascular exercise (and to a lesser extent yoga and meditation) have also been shown to counter depression.

A disadvantage of health supplements is their cost, which can add up and usually isn't covered by health insurance. There is also the issue of safety and quality control. North America doesn't regulate health supplement manufacturing, so you may not always get what's listed on the bottle.

Finally, even natural supplements can have side effects (some can be serious) and the supplements can interfere with your drug regimen, so tell your doctor if you're considering alternative options.

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