st. john's wort

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BLUE, THIS YELLOW-FLOWERED HERB JUST MIGHT BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY.
HERE'S HOW.

By Maureen Meyers Farrar

Are you sad? Feeling down? You're not alone. Approximately 18.8 million American adults, or about 9.5 percent of the US population aged 18 and older, have symptoms of depression in a given year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The good news: There are many kinds of help, including herbal.

A common shrub-like perennial with bright yellow flowers, St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum) contains therapeutic substances when dried. Extracts of the plant have been used for centuries in an effort to alleviate mental disorders as well as nerve pain. Lately, it has been successful in treating mild to moderate depression and anxiety, according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

In a nutshell, St. John's wort appears to increase the level of serotonin, a brain chemical that affects emotions. The herb seems to work like monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors—antidepressant drugs that block the action of their namesake chemical in the nervous system—but less harshly. Although most clinical studies have been done using an extract standardized for hypericin, research findings now indicate that a substance called hyperforin may have even more potent mood-enhancing properties than hypericin. For this reason, when seeking relief from depression, look for an extract standardized to contain 0.3 percent hypericin and 3.0 percent hyperforin. The usual recommended dosage is 900mg a day—divided either into a 450mg pill twice a day or a 300mg pill three times a day. If using a tincture, follow the advice on the bottle for the equivalent dosage.

Regardless of the form, take it with meals to reduce stomach irritation. The most common side effects of St. John's wort include dry mouth, dizziness, gastrointestinal symptoms, fatigue and sensitivity to sunlight.

Like many herbal therapies, St. John's wort isn't a quick fix. It takes some time to build up in the blood, so allow at least four weeks to see if it works for you. If you are already taking a conventional antidepressant such as Prozac, consult with your doctor before taking St. John's wort. Although rare, serious reactions have been reported from the combination.

Currently, scientists at the National Institutes of Health are conducting studies on the herb's effectiveness for numerous psychological conditions. So one day, more doctors may be prescribing the little yellow perennial to brighten the nation's mood—and more.
NATURE'S WAY's ST. JOHN'S WORT is standardized to 3 percent hypericin, and then blended with the whole herb.

Get the absorption of a liquid extract with the convenience of a capsule via GAIA HERBS' ST. JOHN'S WORT.

NATURE'S RESOURCE's ST. JOHN'S WORT is meant to be taken three times daily (with a meal) for effect.

NOW FOODS' ST. JOHN'S WORT is designed to balance mood and encourage feelings of calmness.