HOW TO NATURALLY INCREASE DOPAMINE AND SEROTONIN DEPLETED BY OPIOID ABUSE

Published by Reilly Johnson

The American Society of Addiction Medicine says one of the biggest reasons people fail in addiction is…

“Addiction is not about drugs, it’s about brains. It is not the substances a person uses that make them an addict; it is not even the quantity or frequency of use. Addiction is about what happens in a person’s brain when they are exposed to rewarding substances or rewarding behaviors, and it is more about reward circuitry in the brain than it is about the external chemicals or behavior that “turn on” that reward circuitry.”

If you’ve used opiates for longer than 2-4 weeks, then you’re probably lacking in natural “feel good” brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters.

Your brain has four primary neurotransmitters and each plays a critical and different role in your health and how you feel.

The four primary neurotransmitters are SEROTONIN, DOPAMINE, GABA and NOREpinephrine.
So what do they do for you?

- **Serotonin** regulates sleep and appetite.
- **Dopamine** is the feel good chemical, plays an important role in mood, energy, attitude, motivation.
- **GABA** acts as your calming neurotransmitter, helping you relax.
- **Norepinephrine, also known as Nor-Adrenaline** is for processing information and memory.

**Endorphins (Four listed above)** are feel good chemicals our bodies release under extreme pain. They are considered the bodies own opiates.

And here’s why:

Opiates release 2 to 10 times the amount of dopamine that natural rewards do.
To compensate for these surges your brain begins to automatically produce much less natural dopamine and other key neurotransmitters, which in turn can cause a myriad of opioid withdrawal symptoms and health problems.

When you stop using drugs your brain’s naturally occurring neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, acetylcholine, GABA) are FAR below normal healthy levels.

Why?

Because opioids and all drugs pretty much destroy your body and brain’s production of it’s own natural feel good chemicals.

This creates a neurotransmitter imbalance or deficiency and depending on the deficiency it can cause a wide range of narcotic withdrawal symptoms and health problems.

The Neurotransmitter Imbalances and Chemical Deficiencies Caused by Heroin and Prescription Opioid Pain Reliever Addiction

When your brain’s neurotransmitters are imbalanced, you may feel flat, lifeless, depressed, nervous, anxious, queasy, stressed and unable to enjoy things that use to bring you pleasure in life. Behavior like this is a common sign of a neurotransmitter deficiency or imbalance. And this deficiency often appears during and after opioid addiction.

The longer you’ve used drugs, the greater the imbalance or deficiency may be.

- **Dopamine deficiencies** can cause fatigue, memory lose, depression, addiction, personality disorders, chronic fatigue, panic.
- **Serotonin deficiencies** can cause constipation, nausea, blues, insomnia, addiction, depression, learning disabilities, thought confusion.
- **Norepinephrine deficiencies** can cause anxiety, stress, learning difficulties, agitation, mood swings, memory lapses, attention problems, diminished comprehension.
- **GABA deficiencies** can cause insomnia, sleep disorders, muscle pain, muscle tension, stomach cramps, high anxiety, inability to think clearly, headache, hypertension.

Learning the hard way, costly mistakes taught me that you don’t have to suffer from this imbalance forever, because there are natural ways to raise depleted resources and nutritional deficiencies.
One of the easiest ways to increase brain chemicals is to take natural supplements. Because many natural ingredients have been researched, tested and proven effective at naturally increasing production of brain chemicals.

There are natural ingredients that have shown in study after study to boost biochemicals, resulting in *narcotic withdrawal symptom relief.* Easy to find vitamins and supplements are an excellent way to ensure a steady supply of nutrients essential to the production of neurotransmitters.

### Supplements that Boost Serotonin

*Serotonin effects your sleep, body temperature, sexual behavior and your pain sensations. It’s also a contributor in feelings like happiness and well-being.*

**5-HP (hydroxytryptophan)** – 5-HTP is the precursor to serotonin and helps your brain manufacture more serotonin. It is also the precursor for melatonin, the hormone involved in sleep patterns of the human body.

It works in the way that it helps the body to produce serotonin. 5-HTP is effectively used today for many ailments including weight loss, treating depression, fibromyalgia, migraines and it is said that it helps in treating Alzheimer’s disease, anxiety, down syndrome, alcoholism, opiate withdrawal, PMS and menopausal symptoms and many other symptoms we face. It’s thought to improve mood, help you sleep, and instill feelings of relaxation and calmness.

**St. Johns Wort** – An anti-depressant herb that is commonly on mood and attitude. **MoodLift Complex** contains St. John’s wort, which research shows provides dietary support for a positive mental outlook after four to six weeks of use, and inositol, which complements the activity of St. John’s wort by playing a role in the proper transmission of nerve signals.*
Supplements that Boost Dopamine

Dopamine boosting supplements are very important after addiction. Because these levels are directly impacted by prolonged opiated abuse.

**Vitamin B Complex:** Certain minerals and B-vitamins, especially zinc, vitamin B6, and folate, are necessary for dopamine synthesis and neurotransmission. These nutrients are often depleted in individuals due to medications, inadequate diets, excessive stress, and toxic environmental exposures, compromising the ability to properly synthesize neurotransmitters like dopamine.

**Mucuna Pruriens (extract)** – A deficiency of norepinephrine and dopamine in the brain can result in depression, sadness, lack of focus and low motivation. Fortunately if these levels are low, mucuna pruriens can help rebuild depleted neurotransmitters norepinephrine and boost dopamine. This improves mood and makes more chemical messengers that act in the brain to produce mental alertness and energy. Mucuna Pruriens can rapidly replenish depleted dopamine stores.

Supplements that Boost GABA

GABA supplements can calm the brain and keep you on even keel. They also reduce stress, ease anxiety and promote sleep.

**GABA** – Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid, or GABA is an amino acid that acts as a neurotransmitter in the brain – in the central nervous system. As a supplement GABA is commercially sold as a natural tranquilizer for the neurotransmitter effects. In other words, GABA is used to help people relax, calm down, relieve anxiety and sleep.

**Glutamine** – Helps decrease symptoms of anxiety, relieve muscle spasms, muscle tension

**Melatonin** – Controls sleep functions and awake sleep cycles.

**B-Complex Vitamins** – Produces a calming, relaxing effect by activating GABA and cyclic adenosine monophosphate.
Supplements that Boost Acetylcholine

Acetylcholine is responsible for thinking functions, such as comprehension of language, intelligence, and attention.

The National Academy of Sciences has established that choline is important in the diet because it supports brain, liver, cardiovascular, and reproductive health. Choline is a component of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is involved in the transmission of messages in the brain and nervous system.*

Phosphatidylserine – An impressive volume of research shows that phosphatidylserine, another modified amino acid, benefits acetylcholine deficiency. Recommended for memory disorders and depression.

N-acetyl-cysteine – an amino acid that helps detoxify many chemicals and is a strong antioxidant.

Huperzine-A – Preserves acetylcholine, which helps neurons process memory without losing speed.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Schedule AM</th>
<th>Recovery Schedule PM Before Bedtime</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Shaklee Life Shake and Vitalizer (Probiotic included)</td>
<td>*Stress Release (2)</td>
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<td>*B Complex - (3)</td>
<td>*Gentle Sleep Complex (4)</td>
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<td>Melatonin 5-10 mg</td>
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<td>*MoodLift (2-3)</td>
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<td>*Lecithin (3)</td>
<td>*Lecithin (3)</td>
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<td>*Shaklee Optiflora (2) Probiotic blend</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Shaklee DTX</td>
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<td>5-HTP 300 mg</td>
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Natural Ways to Boost Endorphin Levels and Release “Feel Good” Brain Chemicals At-Home

- **MUSIC** – Music is powerful and can move you emotionally. When you’re coming off opiates you’re body probably feels like it’s thawing out. Your bodies probably more sensitive to touch and sound. Good music can absolutely help your mood and get those brain chemicals working again. Try and listen to mostly upbeat music.
- **MEDITATION** – Meditation helps the nervous system operate at its best; when done properly this produces optimum levels of serotonin and endorphins.
- **LAUGHTER** – Watch a good comedy movie or have a laugh with friends to release endorphins.
- **SUNLIGHT** – bright light increases the production of Serotonin in the body. Spending time in the sunlight can absolutely improve your mood and also soothe muscle aches. Tanning beds can be helpful if no sun is shinning.
- **SEX** – is a powerful producer of endorphins. A long session can dramatically increase endorphins. When you’re in withdrawal sex can be a very nice escape.
- **ACUPUNCTURE** – acupuncture increases circulation and stimulates the release of endorphins. If you haven’t looked into acupuncture while in withdrawal – you might want to try it out, it can be VERY helpful during healing.
- **MASSAGE** – stimulates the release of endorphins. Massaging your own scalp and shower massager’s can provide an affordable alternative to expensive treatments. Massage therapy can feel wonderful.
- **HERBS/SUPPLEMENTS** – St John’s Wort, 5-HTP and L Tyrosine all can increase serotonin, dopamine and in the brain. Thus easing withdrawal symptoms and shortening withdrawal duration.
- **EXERCISE** – is one of the best natural ways to produce both serotonin, dopamine and endorphins. Vigorous exercise is best because the stronger the physical demand you place on your body, the greater the release of endorphins. You should try weight training and high and low intensity exercises. Work out as long as you can.

What Foods to Eat to Increase Neurotransmitter Production in the Brain

You can help replenish neurotransmitters in the brain by eating the right foods.

- **Eat carbohydrate rich meals and lots of vegetables**. Healthy choices include whole grain breads, whole grain pasta, rice, brocolli, spinach lettuce, etc. Eating fat processed foods will do the opposite. Eat better and improve how you feel. (now to contradict myself)
- **Eat sweet foods like chocolate (sparingly)**, only a couple squares of good quality chocolate with a high percentage of Cocoa in it can raise these chemicals.
- **Serotonin is naturally occurring in foods like pineapples**, bananas, nuts and plums.
- **Get an adequate supply of B vitamins**, folic acid and vitamin C because these vitamins play a role in transmitting brain chemicals.
- **Spicy foods like Chile’s, peppers and jalapenos**. The heat triggers the release of endorphins, so the spicier the better.
- **Weight bearing activity builds dopamine and releases endorphins**. Try lifting weights or doing a difficult workout, many begin to feel very good and amped up.