

Part II

EVERYDAY CONTRIBUTORS TO CHEMICAL IMBALANCE AND LOW MOODS

**I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of
the sick according to my ability and judgment;
I will keep them from harm and injustice.**

**—from *The Hippocratic Oath*,
translation by Ludwig Edelstein
Ares Publishers, New York, 1979**

Whether healthy or depressed, active or sedentary, whether we're eighteen, thirty-eight or sixty-eight, all of us are affected by the same principles of health maintenance. Some of the hearty ones can get by with poor nutrition and unhealthy habits for many years before the cumulative negative results begin to manifest. This makes it easier for us to deny the connection between our lifestyles and our health. Yet, in the final analysis, we cannot avoid the simple fact that what goes into our bodies absolutely affects our overall health, quality and quantity of life, and *mood*.

Everyone has stories about exceptions, like uncle Jack who drank three whiskies a day and lived relatively well and happily until age ninety-four. My own grandfather drank one to two bottles of wine daily for all the years I knew him and then died suddenly and peacefully at home when he was eighty-three, without obvious suffering or illness. My grandmother likes to boast he had no gray hair and all of his original teeth, with no cavities. She fed him well—and regularly—and I say good genes contributed, because his smoking but non-drinking sister recently died at one hundred three and another sister died at ninety-

six. His cirrhotic liver did make a difference, and likely cut short his own genetic plan.

Usually it's no single factor that does us in, but the combination that gives such a negative potential. A heavy drinker who eats marvelously healthfully or takes vitamins will withstand the wear far better than the boozer who skips many meals and subsists primarily on the "beverage."

Since there are so many variables influencing us, and since some of them can interfere with or undermine this nutrient treatment, it is important that you read on in order to understand the program within the context of overall good physical and mental habits. Certain conditions in your life may need to change to ensure the long-lasting excellent benefits others have achieved.

As you read about all the variables capable of influencing your mood, you may need to evaluate specific health conditions further. Perhaps you will suspect allergies, thyroid problems, chronic yeast infection or blood sugar problems. Though laboratory tests are not necessary to undertake this treatment, you may refer to the appendix for a list of tests I've used in evaluating many patients who come to me.

We will now consider some factors leading to the unbalanced brain chemistry that, in turn, causes mood changes or even actual depression.