Depression and Anxiety can interfere with daily life, normal functioning, and cause pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about him or her. Depression is a common but serious illness, but many never seek treatment. Intensive research into the illness has resulted in the development of medications, psychotherapies, and other methods to help treat people with this disabling disorder.

Traditional medicine follows the “neurochemical imbalance” theory which attributes depression to an altered production of neurotransmitters or brain chemicals. This deficiency is then treated primarily with medications that try to mimic or increase the production of those chemicals. The holistic community focuses on reestablishing the possible imbalances through diet and nutritional supplements. Unfortunately, some of the “natural” supplements used for anxiety and depression are very similar to the medications, just in smaller doses, raw forms and sometimes unexpected or unstandardized quantities which may have similar side effects as their stronger, pharmacological counterparts.

To maximize the treatment of depression and anxiety, it is essential to take a multi-factorial approach. Nutrition and diet should be addressed first to ensure that vitamin/mineral deficiencies are dealt with first. Exercise and counseling are also paramount to overcoming the symptoms of isolation, lethargy and apathy. Prior to resorting to the medication route, be it a prescription or a “natural” supplement, consider the reasons for the so-called neurotransmitter deficiency as to decide on the best treatment.

Recent research has shown differences in the brains of people who are depressed as compared to people who are not. For instance, the hippocampus, a small part of the brain that is vital to the storage of memories, appears to be smaller in people with a history of depression than in those who’ve never been depressed. A smaller hippocampus has fewer serotonin receptors. Serotonin is a calming neurotransmitter that allows communication between nerves in the brain and the body. Other neurotransmitters such as epinephrine and norepinephrine may be involved in depression.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is the inhalation of pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber which allows the absorption to be increased 15-fold. This painless, non-invasive therapy has been utilized for hundreds of years for the treatment of monoxide poisoning, severe wounds that can’t heal, resistant infections, and more recently for neurologic conditions such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy and traumatic brain injury.

Neubauer Hyperbaric Neurologic Center is located at 4001 Ocean Drive, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, FL 33308. For an appointment, call 954-771-4000/1-800-552-0255 or go to www.oceanhbo.com.