

L-Methylfolate

L-methylfolate (Deplin, MethylPro, Enlyte) is a folate vitamin that treats depression by helping the brain produce neurotransmitters involved in mood (serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine). Up to 70% of people with depression have limited abilities to produce this vitamin.

There are many reasons for these folate problems, including:

- Nutritional deficiency
- Genetic differences in folate metabolism
- Inflammatory medical illnesses
- Alcohol use, smoking, and drug interactions
- Obesity
- Older age

L-methylfolate is one of the only natural treatments cleared by the FDA for depression. It's benefits are backed by strong science, and rival those of medications. Though similar to folic acid, L-methylfolate works better for depression because it is able to enter the brain.

L-methylfolate may also improve memory, cognition, autism, and help valproate (Depakote) work better in bipolar disorder.

How To Take It

Take in morning or night, with or without food. It works within 2-4 weeks.

Cost and Insurance Coverage

Sometimes insurance does not cover L-methylfolate. A cost effective option is Optifolate 15mg (about \$11/month on Amazon, ASIN # B07KPJ5PXS). You can find a link to this methylfolate product at:

www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements

The prescription products have discount programs on their websites (www.deplin.com; www.methylpro.com).

Enlyte is a prescription version of methylfolate that contains other vitamins that improve mood (B-vitamins, iron, magnesium, zinc, coenzyme Q10, and omega-3 fatty acids) (www.enlyterx.com). By combining these other ingredients, Enlyte allows people who take multiple vitamins to save costs and may improve L-methylfolate.

Side Effects

For most people (96%), L-methylfolate is very tolerable, and it can reduce side effects to antidepressants. L-methylfolate has the same rate of side effects as a sugar pill, and is not associated with weight gain, fatigue, insomnia, or sexual dysfunction.

—Chris Aiken, M.D., updated 6/23/2025