

From: Her Desk Drawer

Chocolate peanut butter truffles

This simple truffle recipe will add elegance to any holiday festivity. They also make great gifts for the chocolate lovers on your list!



Truffles:

- 8 oz bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 tbsp butter, softened
- 2 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 1/4 cup icing sugar, sifted
- 2/3 cup whipping cream

Coating (optional):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Finely chopped peanuts | Edible gold flake |
| Unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted | Icing sugar, sifted |
| Chocolate shavings | Chocolate decorations |

In a bowl set over (not in) a saucepan of hot (not boiling) water, melt chocolate with butter, stirring occasionally until smooth. Whisk in peanut butter, icing sugar and whipping cream until smooth. Remove bowl from saucepan. Transfer chocolate mixture to shallow glass baking dish. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until it stiffens but is still pliable. If

it is too stiff to work with, let stand at room temperature for several minutes.

Roll about 4 tsp chocolate mixture in the palm of your hand to form a 1-1/4 inch ball. Place on plate. Repeat with remaining chocolate mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until serving.

To coat truffles: place coating of your choice in small bowl. One at a time, roll the chilled truffles in the coating. Lift, shaking off excess coating. Store coated truffles in refrigerator until serving.

- News Canada

Taking Care of Our Emotional Health

Clinical Depression

It's the start of December, and with winter and the Christmas season right on our doorstep, there is no better time to look for signs of clinical depression in our midst. *It is there!*

Depression is the 'common cold' of emotional disorders, affecting over 17 million North Americans – one in four women and one in 10 men. People of all ages suffer from depression. Close to 50 percent of people with depression who are seen by a doctor are not diagnosed. Only one in four people who are depressed seek treatment! The World Health Organization calculates that by 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of human suffering worldwide.

So what does clinical depression look like? Much different than feeling down or blue – transient emotional states which all of us experience at one time or another – clinical depression can be readily identified by nine specific signs or symptoms:

1. Sleep disturbance – too much, too little
2. Appetite changes – weight loss or gain
3. Depressed mood
4. Diminished interest for pleasurable activities
5. Fatigue – low energy
6. Agitation or sluggishness
7. Concentration difficulties, indecisive, lack of focus
8. Poor self-esteem – feelings of guilt/worthlessness
9. Thoughts of death or suicide

A person needs to have five of the above symptoms, one of which must be depressed mood or diminished interest. The symp-



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toms must persist for at least two weeks, and they must cause significant distress in a person's social life, occupational activities, or other areas of functioning.

There are different types of depression.

Dysthymia is a chronically depressed mood for most of the day for two years, with two of the above symptoms.

Manic Depression is alternating periods of depression and times of high energy/euphoria/mania.

Seasonal Affective Disorder is a condition involving two major depressive episodes within the past two years, occurring mainly in the fall or winter, with symptoms of fatigue, oversleeping, overeating, weight gain, and a craving for carbohydrates.

Post-partum Depression is a deep sadness within the first few months of childbirth, with frequent crying, an inability to sleep, lethargy, and irritability.

The causes of depression are multi-dimensional – social, biological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual. There are numerous risk factors and triggers to depression, including: loss, illness, overwhelming life

stress, sleep deprivation, family history, social isolation, unexpressed emotion, and life transitions such as menopause, empty nest, retirement, aging.

Depression is paralyzing. It creates a web of hopelessness, helplessness, and passivity. No wonder only one in four

people seek treatment. Depression distorts the way we think, alters the way we feel, and affects

what we do. Most people do not just 'snap out' of a depression.

The good news is that depression can be treated successfully.

Behavioral therapy gets people moving to elevate their mood. Any kind of activity, be it physical exercise or cleaning the house, is a good anti-depressant!

Cognitive therapy works to help people restructure negative thought patterns which can trigger and fuel a depression.

Interpersonal therapy encourages people to talk about their life and develop strategies to better manage themselves. Anti-depressant medication, far from being a magic cure, works physiologically to relieve depressive symptoms and restore healthy body chemistry functioning.

Knowledge is a powerful treatment tool as well. The more we can learn about depression, the better we can manage ourselves and be a good support to others.

The Internet and bookstores have good information on depression, and a good book I recommend is Michael Yapko's *Breaking the Patterns of Depression* (1997).

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