

Depression is a medical condition that affects how you feel, think, and act. If left untreated, depression can affect your family and personal relationships, work and school, sleeping and eating habits, and your overall health. However, with the correct treatment, most people who have depression feel better.

Fast Facts on Depression

- ✓ Almost 10 percent of Americans have depression in a given year.
- ✓ Depression is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for people ages 15 to 44.
- ✓ Depression is one of the most common and treatable mental health disorders.
- ✓ Major depression can occur in children, teens, and adults.
- ✓ Most patients who have depression can be effectively treated, and they can return to their normal activities and feelings.

Signs that You or Your Loved One Might Have Depression

Over the past two weeks, have you (or your loved one) often been bothered by:

1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things?
 Yes No
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?
 Yes No

If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, talk to your health care provider.



DEPRESSION

Fast Facts



Symptoms of Depression

Depression can make you feel and act differently than you normally do. The symptoms of depression include:

- ▶ Feeling sad, angry, or irritable
- ▶ Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- ▶ Losing interest in activities usually enjoyed
- ▶ Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- ▶ Losing energy or feeling tired all the time
- ▶ Having extreme changes in appetite or weight
- ▶ Having problems concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- ▶ Thinking about death or hurting oneself

You should seek professional treatment if you experience several of these symptoms at the same time, if they last longer than two weeks, and if they interfere with your normal daily activities.

Causes of Depression

Most experts believe a combination of family history (your genes) and stressful life events may cause depression. **Genes:** People whose family members have had depression are more likely to have depression. **Life events:** Stressful life events can trigger depression. For example, you could become depressed if you have:

- ▶ Lost a loved one
- ▶ Had a baby (depression after childbirth)
- ▶ Recently divorced
- ▶ Long absences from a loved one
- ▶ Constant stress
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ Other life-changing events

Treatment of Depression

Many types of treatments are available, and your health care provider will help you choose the best treatment for you. The three main treatments for depression are self-management, counseling, and medication; your provider may recommend using one or all of these. For more complex and long



term forms of depression, your provider may consider and recommend additional treatment methods.*

Self-Management—There are many things that you can do to help yourself feel better. Even if you don't feel like doing much, try some of these activities:

- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Spend time with loved ones
- ▶ Stick to a regular sleep schedule
- ▶ Avoid alcohol
- ▶ Eat nutritious, balanced meals
- ▶ Pace yourself, don't try to do too much
- ▶ Talk to your provider about treatment options

Counseling—has been shown to be effective in treating many people with depression. Counseling sessions focus on your current concerns and effective ways to treat them, not on your childhood or other unrelated issues. Sessions can be one-on-one with a provider or in group setting.

Types of counseling therapies proven effective by research:

- ▶ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- ▶ Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)
- ▶ Problem-Solving Therapy (PST)

** If counseling and medication do not work, other forms of treatment may help. These include electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), light therapy, biofeedback, and hospitalization.*

Most counseling is brief—often for 45-60 minutes per visit for eight to 20 visits. Counseling is provided by a trained behavioral health specialist and is usually available at your local clinic or hospital.

To find a specialist who uses one of the three recommended therapies ask your primary care provider.

Medication—Prescription medication can often help you recover from depression more quickly. Many people begin to feel better within the first few weeks of treatment. However, because everyone reacts differently to medication, it may take time to find the one that works best for you. Don't get discouraged!

Antidepressant medications:

- ▶ Only work if taken every day
- ▶ Are not habit-forming or addictive
- ▶ Take time to work
- ▶ Must be taken even after you begin to feel better
- ▶ May have mild side effects which usually improve with time
- ▶ Should not be stopped abruptly; If you are thinking about stopping your medication, call your provider first

What is Your Role in Your Treatment?

Your treatment is a partnership between you and your provider. You will get the most help from your treatment if you do the following things:

- ▶ Keep all your appointments whether you are feeling better or worse
- ▶ Talk to your provider about any medication side effects you may be experiencing
- ▶ Take your medication as directed, even when you begin to feel better
- ▶ Talk to your provider about how you are feeling at each visit
- ▶ Educate yourself about depression