



DEPRESSION...

What Is Depression?

Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration. These problems can become chronic or recurrent and lead to substantial impairments in an individual's ability to take care of his or her everyday responsibilities (WHO). At its worst, depression can lead to suicide, a tragic fatality associated with the loss of about 850 000 lives every year.

When a person has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life, normal functioning, and causes pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about him or her. Depression is a common but serious illness, and most who experience it need treatment to get better.

Causes and risk factors for depression

- Loneliness
- Lack of social support
- Recent stressful life experiences
- Family history of depression
- Marital or relationship problems
- Financial strain
- Early childhood trauma or abuse
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Unemployment or under employment
- Health problems or chronic pain



Symptoms include

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable.
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment



Treatment

Depression varies from person to person, but there are some common signs and symptoms. It's important to remember that these symptoms can be part of life's normal lows. But the more symptoms one has, the stronger they are, and the longer they've lasted-the more likely it is that one is dealing with depression. When these symptoms are overwhelming and disabling, that's when it's time to seek help.

The good news is that depression is treatable. One's primary care physician can effectively treat depression by Supportive counseling, prescribing an antidepressant medication and/or referring to a mental health professional. Understanding the underlying cause of depression may help overcome the problem.

Seek help and Support: If even the thought of tackling depression seems overwhelming, one should not panic. Feeling helpless and hopeless is a symptom of depression—not the reality of situation. It does not mean that he/she is weak or can't change! The key to depression recovery is to start small and ask for help. Having a strong support system in place will speed recovery. Isolation fuels depression, so reach out to others, even when one feels like being alone.

Make healthy lifestyle changes: Lifestyle changes are not always easy to make, but they can have a big impact on depression. One could take a good look at their own lifestyle. What changes could he/she make to support depression recovery? Self-help strategies that can be very effective include:

- Cultivating supportive relationships
- Getting regular exercise and sleep
- Eating a healthy, mood-boosting diet
- Managing stress
- Practicing relaxation techniques
- Challenging negative thought patterns

Seek Help from Mental Health professionals: If positive lifestyle changes and support from family and friends aren't enough, seek help from a mental health professional. There are many effective treatments for depression, including therapy, medication, and alternative treatments. Learning about options will help decide what measures are most likely to work best for ones' particular situation and needs.

Therapy: Some types of therapy teach practical techniques on how to reframe negative thinking and employ behavioral skills in combating depression. Therapy can also help to work through the root of depression, helping understand why one feels in a certain way, and what are the triggers for depression, and what can be done to stay healthy.

Depression can be reliably diagnosed in primary care. Antidepressant medications and brief, structured forms of psychotherapy are effective for 60-80 % of those affected and can be delivered in primary care. However, fewer than 25 % of those affected (in some countries fewer than 10 %) receive such treatments. Barriers to effective care include the lack of resources, lack of trained providers, and the social stigma associated with mental disorders including depression.

Dial **040 - 4600 4600**

10:00 am - 7:00 pm • Monday - Friday

Makro Foundation Helpdesk

For free and confidential counseling or emotional support and guidance.

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