

Depression: Brief Version

What is depression?

Depression is when you feel sad and blue, even hopeless. If these feelings last for 2 weeks or more, you may need treatment. If you are not treated, the depression can last much longer or get more serious.

What is the cause?

No one knows just what causes depression. It may happen because some chemicals in the brain are not balanced. It may happen more often in some families.

You may also feel depressed because you:

- Have a medical illness
- Take a medicine that can cause depression
- Have recently had surgery or given birth
- Use alcohol or drugs
- Have lots of stress that you cannot control
- Have recently had a major change in your life

What are the symptoms?

You may have depression if you:

- Feel sad or blue (You may cry, feel tense, upset, or easily bothered.)
- Don't care about things you normally like to do
- Lose weight and do not feel like eating, or eat more often and gain weight
- Have trouble sleeping or sleep more than usual
- Feel tired and do not have any energy
- Feel nervous and restless
- Have less desire for sex
- Feel bad about yourself or guilty
- Have trouble thinking clearly or remembering things
- Think about death or hurting yourself

How is it treated?

You need to get help. You may need therapy and medicine.

Therapy can give you the support you need. It can help you feel less out of control. You can learn to change the way you think and feel.

Antidepressant medicines will usually start to help you feel better within about 3 to 6 weeks. You may need to keep taking the medicine for a long while or even for the rest of your life.

How can I take care of myself?

Make sure you take your medicine and see a therapist.

You can also:

- Find out what activities make you feel better and do those things.
- Join a support group or talk to your family and friends. Do not spend too much time alone.
- Ask for help with your work when you need it. Set limits if people expect too much from you.

It can also help to:

- Eat healthy foods and drink less caffeine.
- Stay away from alcohol or drugs.
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes 3 times a week.
- Sleep 7 to 9 hours per night.
- Find time to relax every day. When you have stress, try to breathe deeply.
- Learn new and better ways to take care of problems.

Before you use any kind of medicine, even birth control pills, ask the healthcare provider if the new medicine could make your depression worse

If you are depressed and feel that you could hurt yourself or someone else, call your healthcare provider or therapist right away.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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