

About Depression



What is depression?

Everybody feels sad, or 'blue' from time to time. This is normal. But when these feelings go on for longer than three weeks, and keep the person from getting on with life in their usual way, that person may be depressed. Many people suffer from depression. For some people, depression may come and go, sometimes depending on the season of the year. For others, it may go on for months and sometimes years without letting up.

Depression is a serious illness, just as diabetes is an illness. It is not anybody's fault. Children can also suffer from depression. Depression can cause a lot of problems in a person's life, with their family and with their job. A depressed person usually cannot get over a depression without medicine and/or therapy.

How will I know if I am depressed?

Some of the feelings and problems that depressed people may have are:

- sadness, sometimes with crying
- worthlessness or feeling unwanted or unloved
- getting upset over little things (being irritable)
- not enjoying things that were fun before
- guilt
- that they have been bad or sinful
- hopelessness
- helplessness
- tiredness
- trouble paying attention and/or making choices
- headaches or pain in other parts of the body
- upset stomach with diarrhea or constipation
- sleeping too much **or** trouble sleeping enough
- eating too much **or** not wanting to eat
- wanting or planning how to die



What causes depression?

Sometimes a person can become depressed by sad things that happen in life, such as the sickness or death of a loved one, or if a marriage or job is not going well. Most of the time, the depression will go away as time passes, or as things get better.

Sometimes depression is caused when there are not enough special brain chemicals to send the right messages to brain cells.

How can depression be helped?

Treating depression takes time and work. It is important for the depressed person's family to be part of the care. Many times, the best treatment is to use both therapy and medicine.

Therapy: It helps to meet with a doctor, nurse or counselor to talk about problems and ways to make things better. Sometimes, meeting with a group of people with the same kinds of problems can be very helpful. Family therapy can often help in understanding depression and how the family and the depressed person can work together to feel better.



Medicine: there are many anti-depressant medicines now available. These medicines must be ordered by a health care provider. These medicines are not habit-forming. Most of them have some side effects that usually settle down in about two weeks. These medicines need to be taken even after the depressed person starts to feel better. Once the depressed person starts to feel better it is still important for them to see the doctor because depression may return.



**If you or someone you know may be
depressed, talk to your
health care provider -**

depression can be helped!