

The Facts About Depression

Percent of Population That Will Experience Depression in Their Lifetime

Men = 10 percent

Women = 20 percent

Symptoms of Depression*

- You no longer enjoy things like you once did.
- You can't fall asleep, or you wake up and can't go back to sleep.
- You feel tired during the day.
- You no longer enjoy food.
- You find yourself eating more or less than usual.
- You have gained or lost weight without trying.
- You have a hard time concentrating.
- You find it hard to sit still.
- You cannot make even simple decisions.
- You feel guilty or bad about yourself.
- You feel people would be better off without you.
- You think about suicide or about ways to hurt yourself.

* If any of these symptoms apply or if you have been feeling sad or hopeless for more than a few weeks, seek help from your doctor.

Getting Your Health and Life Back on Track

1. See Your Primary Doctor First

- Rule out physical causes of depression-like symptoms like
 - Drinking too much alcohol
 - Side effect of medication
 - Thyroid disorder
 - Electrolyte imbalance
 - Anemia (iron, folate, and vitamin B12 deficiencies)

2. Lift Your Spirits

- Join a support group
- Exercise
- Talk to family or friend(s)
- Keep a journal of the good things that happen each day
- Plan to do something that you enjoy every day
- Volunteer/help others

3. See a Specialist for Help

- Psychologist
- Psychiatric nurse
- Social worker
- Certified or licensed professional counselor
- Psychiatrist

4. Antidepressants*

- Use alone
- Use along with therapy
- Combat chemical imbalances
- Restore normal brain chemistry

* Some antidepressants may interfere with other medications.

Lift Your Spirits

Join a support group. Share your thoughts and feelings with others who also have the disease. Learn new skills to cope better.

Exercise. Just moving can work wonders for the way you feel.

Talk to family or friend(s). Sharing your feelings can help release built-up emotions. Get their support for needed changes.

Keep a journal of the good things in life and other thoughts. Write down a poem or prayer that has meaning to you. Write out the many blessings that happen each day. Go back, and read these things whenever you're feeling blue.

Plan an enjoyable day doing something you love. Go shopping, work in the garden, go for a walk in the park, or have lunch with friends.

Volunteer/help others. Volunteering helps us feel good about ourselves, that we're making a difference in someone else's life.