

Signs of Depression and What to Do

Depression can be treated - the earlier treatment starts, the more effective it is. If you think that you might be experiencing depression, seek out a mental health provider so you can get back to being a healthier and happier you.

What is depression?¹

Depression is not just about having a bad day. It can be more serious and negatively affect how a person feels, thinks and acts, decreasing their ability to function well at home and at work. Moreover, depression is common, affecting an estimated 16 million Americans (7%) in a given year. While it can strike anytime, it often first appears during the late teens to mid-20s.

Depression is diagnosed if these symptoms are experienced for more than two weeks²:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., hand-wringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others)
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide

If you feel like you may be experiencing symptoms of depression, it is important that you seek help.

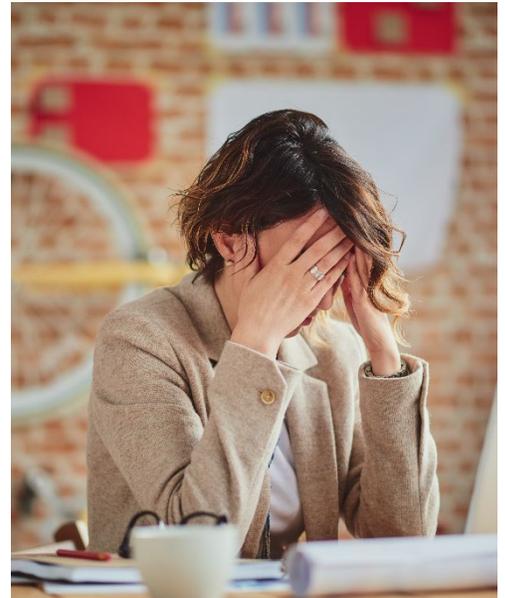
No two people are affected the same way by depression and there is no "one-size-fits-all" for treatment. It may take some trial and error to find the treatment that works best for you.³

Treatment²⁻³

Treatment works. The best treatment for depression is usually a combination of antidepressant medication and psychotherapy.²⁻³ The right treatment plan depends on the individual and should be taken under a medical professional's supervision.

Antidepressant medication can affect people differently and can take 2-4 weeks to see results. Psychiatrists usually recommend that patients continue to take medication for months after symptoms have improved. Longer-term maintenance treatment may be suggested to decrease the risk of future episodes for certain people at high risk. Importantly, ask your provider what to expect when starting medication and alert them if you are experiencing any negative effects.

The most effective psychotherapies for treatment of depression include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), interpersonal therapy (IPT), and problem-solving therapy.³ These therapies are focused on identifying and addressing negative thinking patterns that can affect behavior. Therapy can also help people learn the skills to more effectively manage emotions and cope with stress.



For other information and resources on depression:

References

1. American Psychiatric Association Foundation Center for Workplace Mental Health. <http://workplacementalhealth.org/Mental-Health-Topics/Depression>
2. American Psychiatric Associations. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
3. National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>.

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