

Depression

What is Depression?

Depression is a medical illness that involves the mind and body. It affects how someone feels, thinks and behaves. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. Someone may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and depression may make someone feel as if life isn't worth living. More than just a bout of the blues, depression isn't a weakness, nor is it something that someone can simply "snap out" of. Depression is a chronic illness that usually requires long-term treatment, but most people with depression feel better with medication, psychological counseling or other treatment.

Symptoms to look for:

Symptoms in Adults

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Irritability or 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
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment



Symptoms in Children and Adolescents

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying
- Decreased interest in activities; or inability to enjoy previously favorite activities
- Hopelessness
- Persistent boredom; low energy
- Social isolation, poor communication
- Low self esteem and guilt
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Increased irritability, anger or hostility
- Difficulty with relationships
- Frequent complaints of physical illnesses such as headaches and stomachaches
- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
- Poor concentration
- A major change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Talk of or efforts to run away from home
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide or self-destructive behavior

Best Practices

Interventions for the treatment of depression falls into two main categories: pharmacological and psychosocial interventions. Psychosocial interventions such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy, can be useful. Pharmacological management includes, most often, prescribing antidepressants—including SSRIs, SNRIs, MAOIs, Atypical, Tricyclic and Tetracyclic. A follow-up appointment should occur within 12 weeks of diagnosing and initiating treatment of an adult with an antidepressant medication. Another follow-up appointment should occur within the next 90 days to ensure effective continuation of treatment.

Screening Tools/Resources

Screening Tools:

PHQ-9

Resources:

National Alliance on Mental Illness
nami.org

National Institute of Mental Health
nimh.nih.gov

Substance Abuse and
Mental Health Services Administration
samhsa.gov

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

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