

What is Depression?

Depression is a very common problem and can affect anyone. It is not just feeling “down in the dumps.” It is actually a medical illness (just like diabetes or high blood pressure). Depression affects your thoughts, feelings, physical health, and behaviors. Everyone gets down in the dumps sometimes. People who have the illness of depression feel sad nearly every day for more than just a day at a time. Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad, blue or “down in the dumps.”
- Lack interest in things they used to like to do.
- Feel slowed down or they can feel uneasy.
- Have trouble sleeping or sleep too much.
- Have no energy or feel tired a lot.
- Losing or gaining weight.
- Trouble thinking, remembering, or making decisions.
- Feel worthless or guilty.
- Have thoughts about dying or think about suicide.

What can I do if I think I have depression?

Talk to your doctor. Depression is very treatable. Your doctor can give you medicine or help you find a counselor to work with.

How is depression treated?

- Your doctor will make a treatment plan with you.
- Counseling has been shown to be helpful in treating depression.
- There are medicines your doctor can give you to help depression.
- The combination of counseling and medication has been shown to be most effective for majority of individuals with depression.

What can I do to help myself with depression?

- Exercise helps! Take a short walk, work in the garden, take a bike ride.
- Spend time with friends or family who are supportive.
- Break tasks down into small parts and do a little bit each day even though you might not feel like it.
- Watch a funny movie. Try to find small things to laugh about or enjoy.
- Do something nice to help someone else.
- Try to talk back to negative thoughts you are having.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs.

Compiled from the following sources:

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/information/get-info

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/index.shtml