



LEARN ABOUT DEPRESSION

Are you or someone you know experience symptoms that seem like depression?



Here, you can get answers on how to find out if it is depression. You will also discover what you can do to improve your mood. If you want to find practical answers that work, you are in the right place! The Learning Center is where you will find reliable resources so you can regain your fuller life.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

The word 'depression' means a depressive disorder. It refers to a condition of low mood, behavior, and interest. If you have depression, it can affect many other areas of life as well.

Click here for a great depression self-help book called 'Feeling Good' by Dr. Burns: <https://feelinggood.com/books/>



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HOW CAN YOU TELL IF IT IS SADNESS OR A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER?

It is normal to feel low or sad when things are not going well. If you cannot come out of that unhappy feeling and you start losing interest in pleasurable activities, it could be a depressive disorder. It may affect your sleep, appetite, and energy level. As a result, your concentration or motivation can be worse. If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is vital to get evaluated by a mental health professional



WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU HAVE SOME SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION?

Knowledge is power. Learn and take action within your circle of influence. The following resources and frequently asked questions (FAQs) provide more information about this disorder.

Click here for a depression self-assessment tool: <https://shifahealth.org/phq>

10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DEPRESSION

01. Is depression prevention important for people without depression?

In the past, scientists thought depression was just genetic. New studies show that we can prevent the onset of depression. Education is a crucial component to promoting health and wellness.^{3, 4} The Learning Center at Shifa Health is a great place to empower yourself with knowledge! Here you can rest assured you will find material that is valid, current, and specific.

Many people experience depression at some point in their life. In the United States, depression is the number one cause of disability. 1, Depression contributes to the likelihood of attempting suicide. Depression can occur alone or in combination with another psychiatric disorder, such as anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). More than half of Americans will be diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder within their lifetime.² Furthermore, over 20% of Americans suffer from an exacerbation of mental illness in a given year.² Early treatment is critical! Watch this video by Dr. Rozina for more on the importance of depression prevention: <https://youtu.be/TbVjgWgEwRI>

02. Does the stress from the coronavirus pandemic increase my chance for depression?

Yes. We all currently lack some protective mechanisms we usually depend on, like a social connection to loved ones. For people working in healthcare, the risk is even higher due to stress from caretaking or fear of contracting the virus. Isolation and anxiety can make the risk of depression higher during the coronavirus pandemic. Self-care is more important than ever right now. Click here for a booklet on thriving and surviving during COVID-19: <https://drrozina.com/videofiles/thrived.pdf>

03. Does feeling depressed or sad mean that I am depressed?

A depressed mood or feeling sad is a normal fluctuation of emotion for a short period. Grief from loss or a new, profound stress can cause a depressed mood. However, you may be suffering from clinical depression if the feeling occurs for a long time or you cannot enjoy things you used to enjoy. If your depressed mood causes you to wish you were dead, get help right away. If you feel suicidal, call 911 or go to an emergency department immediately. Often, people speak of these terms interchangeably, but they are different. Watch this video by Dr. Rozina on how to tell if you are just sad or depressed: <https://youtu.be/WpS5HTDUUV0>

04. If I am functioning well, does that mean I don't have depression?

No, plenty of people with depression still function by masking their feelings and pushing through pain. These people may suffer deeply on the inside. They might deny feeling depressed when others ask. Instead, they state they are merely sad or tired. Many factors affect symptoms, including age and culture. What is not considered "normal" in one culture may be perfectly acceptable behavior in another. Depression caused by grief can look very different from person to person, too. Just as humans are unique, so is the way individuals express themselves and their mental health state.

05. Can I trust what I read online about depression?

Although there is plenty of information online about self-care and wellness to prevent depression, much of it is too general or inaccurate. Lack of access to mental health continues to be a root cause for the mental health crisis in America. Lack of awareness, including resources for mental health services, is reported to be a reason many turn to information online. Some people are more likely than others to have difficulty discriminating legitimate information online. Always speak to your healthcare provider about any questions or concerns you may have regarding your health or medications.

06. What type of therapy can I do?

'Therapy' is short for psychotherapy in mental health. There are many different therapy types, but some have better evidence to support their effectiveness and are more easily accessible than others. CBT, interpersonal therapy (IPT), and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) are the most effective and readily available options.⁶ CBT targets unhelpful thoughts and behaviors. The focus is on the connection between thoughts, feelings, and actions.⁷ People in CBT learn skills and techniques in therapy sessions and homework assignments. This type of therapy is also the most effective in reducing substance use, such as cigarettes or alcohol. It has been researched the most out of all therapy modalities.

A few other evidence-based therapy options that you may also be interested in are IPT and MBCT. In IPT, people resolve issues with relationships through attachment-focused psychotherapy. The focus is on the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors people learn to suppress or overemphasize due to early attachment experiences with their primary caregivers.⁶ If you would like to do therapy that primarily focuses on your relationships, then IPT may be a good option for you.

Lastly, MBCT is a relatively newer type of evidence-based therapy where CBT techniques are utilized alongside mindfulness meditative practices to teach conscious awareness of thoughts and feelings without judging them.⁶ Thus, MBCT is essentially a combination of CBT and mindfulness.⁶ In summary, psychotherapy can transform your depression into happiness. Your healthcare provider will assist you in identifying the best one for you.



07. If I do have depression, can I make it go away?

Yes! Many people who seek treatment get better. Your healthcare provider will work with you to achieve remission from depression. There are a variety of options depending on preference and current evidence. Research shows that medications and psychotherapy, or counseling, are equally effective in the treatment of some types of depression. For individuals who have not found a significant benefit to their current treatment, many studies support adding medication or counseling to the initial treatment.

08. How do you make depression go away? Do you always have to take medication?

Not necessarily. Whether you need a medication depends on the depression type, frequency, and stage. Providers treat depression with antidepressants or psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT).

In CBT, therapists challenge people's unhelpful thoughts and behaviors through various strategies that focus on the connection between thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and actions. Psychotherapy, medication, or advanced treatments may be used either alone or in combination to treat depression. Watch this video by Dr. Rozina for more on how to overcome mild depression on your own: <https://youtu.be/ThrjkdnTWqs>

09. What if depression is severe or I have been struggling for a long time?

When depression is severe, treatment may consist of long-term antidepressant therapy with the addition of psychotherapy. In these cases, current evidence highlights the importance of continuing antidepressant medication for six months if someone has achieved remission or a year or indefinitely if they are at high risk for recurrent episodes.

Additionally, people at high risk for relapse are likely to benefit from CBT, interpersonal therapy (IPT), or mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). There is also evidence to support advanced therapies for treatment-resistant depression such as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) or Spravato.

TMS may be a promising treatment option for those with treatment-resistant depression who wish to avoid medicine.⁴ It works much in the same way as an MRI machine does.⁴ Spravato, on the other hand, is a medication known as esketamine that has helped many people with treatment-resistant depression as well.⁴ You and your healthcare provider will decide together what is best for you. Watch this video by Dr. Rozina on TMS treatment for depression: <https://youtu.be/TbDdgouc7ak>



10. What is mindfulness, and how can it help depression go away?

Mindfulness is present moment awareness of body, mind, and spirit. It decreases stress by attitude and behavior. You can practice anywhere and anytime. Usually, the main goal is to notice thoughts and feelings without judgment. By tuning inward, you can promote positive feelings while letting go of unhelpful ones.

You can practice mindfulness while washing your hands or doing the dishes. Rather than thinking about the events of your day, focus on the sensation of the warm water. How does the soapy water feel? What does this sensation lead you to think? Congratulations, you just practiced mindfulness! There is an abundance of mindfulness practices and activities that you can learn. Mindfulness is not only traditional meditation. Watch this video by Dr. Rozina on how to start practicing mindfulness: <https://youtu.be/WxNxBKMDfEEA>

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