

# Depression

Depression (major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. Some forms of depression are slightly different, or they may develop under unique circumstances, such as:

- Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
- Perinatal Depression (including Post-Partum Depression)
- Psychotic Depression
- Seasonal Affective Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder

Not everyone who is depressed experiences every symptom. Some people experience only a few symptoms while others may experience many.

## Treatment and Therapies

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is. Depression is usually treated with medications, psychotherapy ("talk therapy"), or a combination of the two. Therapy can also take place in a group format. Examples of evidence-based approaches specific to the treatment of depression include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) – can help you recognize things that may be contributing to your depression and help you to change behaviors that may be making the depression worse.
- Interpersonal Therapy - designed to help an individual understand and work through troubled relationships that may cause the depression or make it worse.
- Problem-Solving Therapy (PST) - using a step-by-step process, you identify problems and come up with realistic solutions.

If these treatments do not reduce symptoms, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and other brain stimulation therapies may be options to explore.

## Signs and Symptoms

If you have been experiencing some of the following signs and symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

## Medications

Antidepressants are medicines that treat depression. They may help improve the way your brain uses certain chemicals that control mood or stress. There are several types of antidepressants:

- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI)
- Serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRI)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (TCA)
- Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI)

### You and your prescriber should discuss:

- How well medications are working or might work to improve your symptoms
- Benefits and side effects of each medication
- Risk for serious side effects based on your medical history
- The likelihood of the medications requiring lifestyle changes
- Costs of each medication
- Other alternative therapies, medications, vitamins, and supplements you are taking and how these may affect your treatment
- How the medication should be stopped? Some drugs can't be stopped abruptly but must be tapered off slowly under a prescriber's supervision.

## Beyond Treatment: Things You Can Do

Here are other tips that may help you or a loved one during treatment for depression:

- Try to be active and exercise.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative.
- Try not to isolate yourself, and let others help you.
- Expect your mood to improve
- Postpone important decisions, such as getting married or divorced, or changing jobs until you feel better. Discuss decisions with others who know you well and have a more objective view of your situation.
- Continue to educate yourself about Depression.

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# DEPRESSION

## If you are thinking about harming yourself or thinking about suicide:

- Tell someone who can help right away
- Call your licensed mental health professional if you are already working with one
- Call your prescriber
- Go to the nearest hospital emergency department

## If a loved one is considering suicide

Here are other tips that may help you or a loved one during treatment for depression:

- Do not leave him or her alone
- Try to get your loved one to seek immediate help from a medical professional or the nearest hospital emergency room, or call 911
- Remove access to firearms or other potential tools for suicide, including medications

## For Immediate Help

If you are worried that you or someone you love needs help now, call one of the following 24/7 hotlines that specialize in providing emergency and crisis services in Western New York:

### Erie County

(Crisis Services of Erie County)  
(716) 834-3131

### Buffalo & Erie County

(24 Hour Addiction Hotline)  
(716) 831-7007

### Niagara County

(Niagara County Crisis Hotline)  
(716) 285-3515

### Genesee County

(Care + Crisis Helpline):  
(585) 344-4400  
or 1-844-345-4400

## Where can I find more information about depression?

### MedlinePlus

National Library of Medicine:

<http://medlineplus.gov>

En Español:

<http://medlineplus.gov/spanish>

### National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>



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