

*The Doctor is in ...*

## Getting Out of a Funk: Fighting Depression

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**E**veryone has days when they feel sad, low or down. When these days go on for two or more weeks, it's time to consider getting help.

Life is full of ups and downs. The holiday season is a time of joy for many people. But the holidays may bring a host of different emotions for others—especially military families with deployed loved ones.

About one out of every six adults will have depression at some time in their lives—it affects about 15 million American adults every year. Depression is more than feeling sad or having a bad day. It is a medical illness that involves the body, mood and thoughts that can't be willed or wished away. It is also a treatable disorder. The good news is the majority of people who receive treatment overcome the illness and return to normal lives.

The symptoms of depression include sadness, sleep disturbance, appetite change, lack of energy, loss of motivation, slower pace, increased anxiety, poor concentration, loss of self confidence and, for some, thoughts of suicide. Depression can be a recurring condition, so paying attention to symptoms and seeking prompt medical care are important.

If you can't seem to shake the holiday blues, you may be suffering from depression—and help is available. TRICARE offers many benefits, services and programs for you.

Non-active duty TRICARE beneficiaries can get their first eight behavioral health care outpatient visits per fiscal year (Oct. 1–Sept. 30) from a TRICARE provider without a referral or prior authorization. To find out more about getting help, go to [www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth](http://www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth).

To help beneficiaries privately evaluate their emotional well-being, the Department of Defense offers the "Military Health Assessment" at [www.militarymentalhealth.org](http://www.militarymentalhealth.org) as a good place to start. It's a free, anonymous self-assessment to determine if symptoms are consistent with a condition or concern that could benefit from further evaluation or

*continued on page 2*

## Tips for Using the Express Scripts Call Center and Website

**W**hat is the best day to call Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts)? When I call for my spouse, my child or the person I take care of, what information do I need to have ready? What information can I find on the website? These questions and more are answered in this article.

*When do I call?* Typically, Monday is the busiest day of the week for the Express Scripts call centers. If your issue isn't urgent, try calling Thursdays, the lightest day of the week. If you are concerned about being placed on hold before speaking to an advocate, try calling in the afternoon. Call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303.

*What do I need?* Be sure to have your sponsor identification (ID) number or the sponsor ID number of the person you are calling for available when you call. This will make it easier

*...continued on page 3*

### Inside This Issue ...

- When to Seek Urgent Versus Emergency Care
- Canceling Scheduled Appointments
- Transfer Your Medical Records When You Move
- Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities



**An Important Note about TRICARE Program Information:** At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this publication.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

## When to Seek Urgent Versus Emergency Care

Knowing the differences between urgent care and emergency care can help you seek the most appropriate and cost-effective service. When your condition is not life-threatening, it can actually be faster and more convenient for you if you choose to receive care from your primary care manager (PCM) or at an urgent care center rather than at an emergency room, which can be expensive and require hours of waiting in uncomfortable surroundings.

### Urgent Care

TRICARE defines urgent care as medically necessary treatment for an illness or injury that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately but that requires professional attention within 24 hours.

Examples of conditions that should receive urgent treatment are sprains, scrapes, earaches, sore throats and rising temperature—conditions that are serious but not life-threatening. In many cases, you can receive urgent care from your PCM by making a same-day appointment.

If you are out of town or your PCM does not have an appointment available, you can get a referral from your PCM and proceed immediately to an urgent care center. If you cannot reach your PCM, call Health Net Federal Services, LLC (Health Net) for assistance. Failure to do so may result in you being charged a point-of-service cost-share (50% of the TRICARE-allowable charge after the annual deductible

has been met). Take a moment to locate the closest network urgent care center by using the provider directory on Health Net's website at [www.hnfs.com](http://www.hnfs.com).

### Emergency Care

TRICARE defines an emergency as a medical, maternity or psychiatric condition that would lead a "prudent layperson" (someone with an average knowledge of health and medicine) to believe that a serious medical condition exists; that the absence of immediate medical attention would result in a threat to life, limb or sight; when a person has severe, painful symptoms requiring immediate attention to relieve suffering; or when a person is at immediate risk to self or others.

Conditions that require emergency care include loss of consciousness, shortness of breath, chest pain, uncontrolled bleeding, sudden or unexpected weakness or paralysis, poisoning, suicide attempts and drug overdose. Pregnancy-related medical emergencies involve a sudden and unexpected medical complication that puts the mother, the baby or both at risk. TRICARE does not consider a delivery after the 34th week an emergency.

If you require emergency care, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you are admitted, you must notify your PCM or Health Net within 24 hours or on the next business day to coordinate ongoing care and make sure you receive proper authorization. ■

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*continued from page 1*

treatment. The self-assessment also tells beneficiaries where to go for help, if needed.

Additionally, the Web-based TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) uses telecommunications technologies to provide non-medical counseling assistance and non-medical behavioral health care to active duty service members (ADSMs), spouses and other eligible family members ages 18 and older. Services include assessments, short-term counseling and, if the TRIAP counselor

determines more specialized care is necessary, a referral to another level of care. Eligible beneficiaries can access your regional contractor's website or [www.tricare.mil/TRIAP](http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP) to get more information about the program.

Military OneSource is another valuable resource. Military OneSource is a toll-free information and referral service that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for ADSMs, activated National Guard and Reserve members, deployed civilians and families. It provides information on topics from everyday concerns to deployment and reintegration issues. For more information, contact Military OneSource at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) or call 1-800-342-9647 in the United States. Overseas beneficiaries can call U.S. access code +800-3429-6477 or U.S. access code +484-530-5908. ■

## Tips for Using the Express Scripts Call Center and Website

*continued from page 1*

to access your information in our computer system. If you don't have this information, the advocate can look you up by name and date of birth.

Whether you are calling for yourself or someone else, you will need to provide three points of verification for the patient. This includes the name, date of birth and the sponsor's ID number. Any information about specific medications they are taking is considered to be protected health information (PHI), so you will need to provide the prescription number and/or drug name for each of the medications. Due to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), advocates can only discuss the prescriptions you specifically ask about by name, and only after verification has been completed.

When calling for a minor, HIPAA rules state you must be the parent or legal guardian. Be prepared with a list of the minor's medications, the strengths and dosage form (e.g., tablet, syrup) you are calling about. Again, Express Scripts can only discuss the medications you ask about by name.

Pharmacists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to answer questions about possible drug interactions and side effects associated with the medication you ordered through home delivery. Questions about the status of your order and about billing are handled by patient care advocates.

Clinical questions about your prescription should be answered by your physician. These types of questions are typically about the dosage and directions for taking the medication.

*What can I do online?* Some beneficiaries prefer to take care of their prescription benefit needs online. From the Express

Scripts website, [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE), you can:

- View your prescriptions, sign up for home delivery and request refills
- Check on the status of an order or a claim
- Find a network pharmacy, including those that offer specialty medications or vaccines
- Find out a medication's cost
- Request an explanation of benefits (EOB) for your prescription history
- Find out which medications are preferred under the TRICARE pharmacy benefit
- Click the "Contact Us" link to access toll-free numbers to reach Express Scripts in the United States and overseas, the Express Scripts mailing address and the Fraud Tip Hot Line.

Please note that many of the features on this site require a login. The first time you use the site, have your sponsor ID number handy to complete the registration process, which should only take a few minutes.

The TRICARE website, [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil), contains information about all TRICARE benefits. The pharmacy section of the website provides information about the TRICARE Pharmacy Program, whether your medication is covered and the different options for getting your prescriptions filled. The website also has information about how your prescription drug coverage works when combined with other health insurance. You can find information about how and when to file a prescription claim, how to appeal a pharmacy decision or how to file a grievance. Information about the Medicare prescription drug program is available as well. ■

## Canceling Scheduled Appointments

If you need to cancel a scheduled appointment, please contact your health care provider within the appropriate time frame. Providers' offices often require notice 24 to 48 hours before your scheduled appointment if you are going to miss it.

Check with your provider about specific policies regarding canceled or missed appointments. Some providers charge

missed-appointment fees, which are not covered by TRICARE. You are responsible for paying these fees. While there are no fees involved with missed military treatment facility appointments, canceling at least one day in advance will allow someone else to use that appointment slot. ■

# TRICARE HealthMatters

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## TRICARE

### An Excellent Value

- Generous coverage
- Superior health care
- Decisions are health driven, not insurance driven
- High satisfaction with care
- Low out-of-pocket costs
- Easy access



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## Transfer Your Medical Records When You Move

**W**hen moving or making a permanent change of station, it is always your responsibility to request a copy of your medical records be sent to your new health care provider or military treatment facility (MTF). Transferring your medical records to your new location will assist your new provider in many aspects of your care, appropriate to your specific medical history and needs.

The most important thing to remember about transferring your medical records is to plan ahead. Requests for records must be done in writing. If you request records for family members over 18, each patient will have to complete a release form. Generally, you should request your medical records at least 30 days in advance. Talk to your primary care manager or check with your medical records custodian

or other medical record authority at your MTF to determine its policy and ask what steps you need to take to transfer your records to your new location.

Records from a civilian provider can be forwarded directly to your new provider or MTF or given directly to you. Please be aware that some civilian providers may charge a small fee for copying records for which the patient (including active duty service members) is responsible. Remember to contact any specialty care providers (e.g., cardiologists, obstetricians, orthopedic surgeons) you or your family members have visited to ask about transferring records.

Additionally, wherever you are moving, always update your personal information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). ■

## Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

TRICARE beneficiaries have rights and responsibilities pertaining to their health care. For more information, TRICARE beneficiaries can visit the Health Net Federal Services, LLC website at [www.hnfs.com](http://www.hnfs.com), access the beneficiary portal and click on the "Bill of Rights" link under "TRICARE Resources." ■

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