



Shed a Tear for Depression!

Treatment Helps It Go Away

Depression is a common, but complex mental-health problem and one that people don't always understand. We all have days when we feel down, gloomy or just plain sad for no particular reason. It's those times when we just want to stay in bed, with the covers over our heads. Fortunately, these emotions usually pass within a few days and we get on with our lives.

But for many people, the bad feelings persist. And persist. And persist. It's at this point that temporary depressed feelings — that “blue mood” — become depression, the illness.

Depression involves a person's body, mood and thoughts. It affects the way you think about yourself and the way you look at the world around you. Many unpleasant physical symptoms also can be caused by depression, including headaches, digestive problems and insomnia.

If you have depression, do not be ashamed or think it is something that you can “just snap out of.” Depression is a medical illness and a treatable illness, much like diabetes or high-blood pressure.

More than 19 million Americans are affected by depression every year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. For those who get treatment, about 80 percent experience relief from their symptoms.

People who are depressed do not all experience the same symptoms. Here are some of the most common ones:

- loss of pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- significant weight gain or loss
- insomnia or sleeping too much
- feeling very fidgety or very lethargic
- fatigue or loss of energy
- feelings of worthlessness or feeling guilty for an inappropriate reason
- less able to concentrate and think clearly
- recurring thoughts of death, suicidal thinking or suicide attempts.



SYMPTOMS

If you have any of these symptoms for more than a couple of weeks, you should see a health-care professional. Tell your provider how your symptoms are affecting your ability to function at home, at work, or with family, friends or co-workers.

Let's Talk About It

Psychotherapy – or “talk therapy – is an effective treatment for depression. It helps a person realistically look at what is causing the bad feelings, and it helps a person develop appropriate coping strategies for dealing with stress and other overwhelming negative feelings.

Click here for some tips on how to get the most out of therapy.

How Will Therapy Help Me?

- It helps reduce stress in your life.
- It gives you a new perspective on problems with family, friends or co-workers.
- You learn ways to talk to other people about your condition.
- It helps catch early signs that your depression might be getting worse.

What About Medications?

A number of medications have proven to be highly effective in treating depression, especially when used in conjunction with psychotherapy. If your provider prescribes an antidepressant medication, remember that it usually takes several weeks before its positive effects are seen.

A final thought....

If you are depressed, it may seem like a lot of work to get yourself help. But it is important to realize those feelings are part of the depression and do not accurately reflect actual circumstances. The sooner you get help, the quicker negative feelings will fade and the better you will feel.

Resources

www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depression.cfm