

## Depression

Depression is a condition defined by depressed mood or a loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities that lasts longer than two weeks and includes other symptoms that impact activities of daily living.

### Risk

If left untreated, depression may cause serious, long-lasting symptoms and can disrupt a person's ability to perform routine tasks. People with depression may no longer be interested in their family, job, or hobbies they used to enjoy. Depression may also increase the risk of developing other chronic health conditions and can increase risk of death by suicide.

### Medication

There are many different treatment options for depression, including both medication and non-medication options.

While some symptoms of depression may improve within the first few weeks of starting medication, it may take up to 4–8 weeks to see the full benefit of the medicine. It is important to continue taking the medicine as directed by your doctor or health care provider because suddenly stopping the medicine can cause withdrawal symptoms and is unsafe.

Taking your medications correctly is an important part of treating depression. Talk with your pharmacist about ways to remember to take your medications.

### Monitoring

It is important for people taking antidepressants to have regular check-ups with a health care provider, especially when first starting, to ensure the treatment is working. Some people may experience medication side effects. These side effects typically get better within the first few weeks of treatment. Contact your health care provider if side effects are not tolerable or symptoms do not improve or get worse.

**If you feel like you might hurt yourself, go to the nearest emergency room, contact your health care provider, or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or visit [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).**



### Other things you can do

Lifestyle changes may help manage depression. Some helpful tips include:

- Identify ways to reduce or manage stress
- Engage in regular physical activity
- Eat a healthy diet
- Seek counseling

Women of childbearing age who are thinking about becoming pregnant should contact their provider to talk about the safety of antidepressant medication use during pregnancy.

### Resources

1. American Psychiatric Association (APA). What Is Depression? <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
2. Mayo Clinic. Depression (major depressive disorder). <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>
3. National Institute of Mental Health (NIH). Depression. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>