

Depression in Adults

Depression is a mood disorder that causes consistent feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and loss of interest. Depression affects how you feel, think, and behave, and can also lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. It is also known as major depressive disorder or clinical depression.

Signs & Symptoms

Depression is a serious disorder that can have lasting effects. Depression often gets worse if not treated, resulting in emotional, behavioral and health problems that affect everyday life. Although depression may occur only once in a person's life, people usually have multiple episodes. Someone with depression might:

- Have persistent feelings of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness
- Lose interest in everyday activities
- Have frequent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide
- Have unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

Risk Factors

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. Research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. Risk can increase with a family history of depression, major life changes or trauma, and certain physical illnesses. Especially in midlife or older adults, depression can co-occur with other serious medical illnesses such as diabetes, cancer or heart disease. When depression is present, these illnesses can be worsened.

Diagnosis & Treatment

If you think you have depression, the first step is to talk to a healthcare provider. Your doctor will review your medical history and do a physical exam to rule out other conditions that may be causing your symptoms. If other factors can be ruled out, your doctor may refer you to a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, counselor, social worker, or psychiatrist. Medications and psychotherapy are effective treatments for most people with depression. Your doctor or psychiatrist can prescribe medications to relieve symptoms. However, many people with depression also benefit from seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health professional regularly. **If you or a loved one is suffering from depression, call our 24-Hour Helpline at 1.800.928.8000. We can help.**

Source - National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>