

## About Depression

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We all have our share of good days and bad. After all, life is filled with many ups and downs. Some days may be so bad that we have trouble doing what we need or want to, or we might not feel like doing anything at all.

This could be depression – a common but serious illness.

### Symptoms of depression

Each year, millions of people are diagnosed with depression. It can



affect a person's mood (feelings), mind (thoughts) and actions. Depression can also affect how the body functions and even relationships with others.

Here are some symptoms of depression:

- Sad feelings that last more than two weeks
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite - wanting to eat a lot more or much less

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- Changes in weight - gaining or losing more than 5 percent of body weight
  - Trouble sleeping – either sleeping too little or too much
  - Restless feelings - like you always have to be doing something
  - Little to no pep or energy
  - Feelings of being guilty or worthless
  - Trouble thinking or paying attention
  - Frequent thoughts of death or suicide (killing yourself).

### **Why people have depression and how they cope (deal) with it**

Depression affects men, women and children of all ages and ethnic groups.

Here are some facts to know:

- Men and women often cope with depression in different ways. For instance, women may become withdrawn and avoid people. They may also gain or lose a lot of weight. For help, women may look to their friends, family or prayer. Men may say they feel tired or grouchy, not depressed. To cope, men may drink, use drugs, work too much, or engage in reckless behavior such as driving cars too fast.

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- Infants and children can have depression. Often, it is caused by family problems, allergies, or autoimmune diseases such as diabetes.
  - People with a lot of stress, poor education or problems such as losing jobs or getting divorced, may have depression.
  - People who are overweight, inactive or in poor health are also at risk for depression.

### **Depression, limb loss and diabetes**

Studies show that people who have limb loss or other traumas are at increased risk for depression. So are those with diabetes or other chronic conditions. People with both limb loss and diabetes are even more likely to have depression.

Depression and poor health form a vicious cycle. For instance, a person with depression may not eat right, take medication correctly, or follow medical advice. This, in turn, can lead to poor health. As the person's health gets worse, so does the depression.

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## What to do when you have depression

The good news is that depression can be treated. Here are some things you can do:

- **Make an appointment for a medical exam (check-up).**

Talk with your doctor about any symptoms of depression.

Your doctor can check



whether these are due to physical illness, medication or depression.

- **Ask to meet with a mental health professional (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor or social worker).** He or she can talk with you about treatment options such as psychotherapy (talking therapy), antidepressant medication, or both.
- **Stay active.** Make an effort to do activities you enjoy, such as walking, yoga or other types of light exercise.
- **Be with others.** Try not to always be alone. Many people with depression find it helpful to join a support group (either in person

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on online). This is a way to talk with others who are dealing with problems like yours. Ask your doctor or mental health professional about support groups that are right for you.

- **Be patient.** Do not expect too much from yourself right away. It takes a while to feel better after depression. The good news is that millions of people with depression feel better each day.

### **Ways to learn more**

- Ask your doctor or health clinic to refer you to a mental health professional. You can also look in the yellow pages of the phone book under headings such as “mental health,” “health,” “social services,” “crisis intervention services,” “hotlines,” “hospitals” or “physicians.”
- You can find a local hospital or crisis center by calling the National Hopeline Network at 800/784-2433 or going to their Web site at [www.hopeline.com](http://www.hopeline.com).

*Translated from **The Dual Danger of Depression and Diabetes***