

Depression



What is depression?

While everyone can go through times of feeling down or grieving for a while after suffering a loss, people with the medical condition depression can experience such feelings of sadness or having no interest in activities around them that go on for a long time. Depression is common and can occur in people of all ages, backgrounds and ethnic groups.

Recognising depression

Depression is a medical condition with symptoms that may differ from person to person. Signs and symptoms of depression:

- A persistent sad mood and/or
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most activities

Accompanied by some of the following:

- Changes in appetite or weight
- Changes in sleeping pattern
- Noticeable restlessness or decreased activity
- Lethargy and loss of energy
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Recurrent thoughts of self-harm, death or suicide.

Medical help should be sought for symptoms lasting over 2 weeks, which are troublesome enough to interfere with daily life.



What causes depression?

The exact cause of depression is not clear. Sometimes, depression seems to occur after a stressful event. However, it may also seem to occur for no reason at all. Today, it is widely recognised that depression is a medical condition that may be associated with an imbalance in the brain's delicate chemistry.

Depression is treatable

Most depressed people can benefit from treatment.

Early recognition and treatment seem to decrease the length and severity of depressive episodes for most people. Treatment options include counselling and antidepressant medication, or a combination of both. It is essential to talk to a doctor if you think you, or someone you care about, may be depressed. Depression is not a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it is a medical condition that responds well to treatment.

Myths and facts about depression

Myths about depression:

- Depression is always a response to a bad life situation
- If you can't snap out of your depression, it means you are weak
- If you wait it out, your depression will always go
- Antidepressant medicines are addictive and they change your personality

Facts about depression:

- Sometimes, depression occurs even when your life is going well.
- Depression doesn't mean you have a flawed character or aren't strong enough. It is a medical condition.
- If you are suffering from depression, it may not just go away.
- Antidepressants are not habit-forming. They do not turn you into a different person - they make you feel more like yourself again.

