Depression

1. What Is Depression?

Depression is a medical illness. It is just as much an illness as are diabetes and heart disease. Depression is not a sign of being weak. It is not the person’s “fault.” A person who is depressed:

- Feels sad.
- Feels hopeless.
- Feels helpless.
- Sleeps too little or too much.
- Thinks negative thoughts.
- Has lost interest in life.

Depression makes a person less able to manage his or her life. It affects everything from mood to behavior.

Persons of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds get depression. In the U.S., it will affect 10 to 25 percent of women and 5 to 12 percent of men during their lifetimes.

2. Types & Symptoms

There are 3 common types. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and can last a short time or a long time.

Major Depression

This is also called clinical depression. You may have this type if, for 2 or more weeks, you have 5 or more of the symptoms listed below and on the next page or you have 1 or 2 of the symptoms in bold type.

1. Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy.
2. Feeling sad, blue, or down in the dumps.
3. Changes in appetite.
4. Feeling worthless or guilty.
5. Changes in appetite. You lose or gain weight.
6. Loss of energy or feeling tired all of the time.
7. Problems concentrating or thinking. It is hard for you to remember things or make decisions.
8. Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.

You Could Also Have One or More of These Symptoms

- Anger.
- Headaches or other aches and pains.
- Stomach mailbo-bad problems.
- Sexual problems.

Feeling negative, hopeless, anxious or worried:

Note: Postpartum depression is a form of major depression that occurs in the mother after giving birth. Depression symptoms last more than 2 weeks after the baby is born.

Dysthymia

This is a mild but long lasting type of depression. An adult is thought to have this type when he or she has had a depressed mood for most of the day, more days than not, for at least 2 years. For children, the same is true, but the symptoms are present for at least 1 year. Besides being sad, children with dysthymia may often:

- Be irritable, cranky, or act difficult.
- Have low self-esteem.

 dysthymia, symptoms drain the person’s energy and keep him or her from feeling good. Sometimes people with dysthymia have bouts of major depression.

Bipolar Disorder

This used to be called manic-depression. With bipolar disorder, there are feelings of extremes “highs.” With these “highs,” a person feels happy, giddy, elated, or euphoric (manic). These cycles of “highs” and “lows” can last from days to months. In between these cycles, persons with bipolar disorder can feel normal.

You may have this type of depression if you have had 4 of the symptoms below at one time for at least 1 week. You may have had the symptoms in bold type.

1. Feel unusually “high,” euphoric, or irritable.
2. You need less sleep.
3. You talk a lot or feel that you can’t stop talking.
4. You get lots of ideas at one time.
5. You are easily distracted.
6. You need less sleep.
7. You do things that feel good, but that have bad effects (e.g., foolish business ventures or uncontrolled spending habits).
8. You have feelings of greatness.
9. You make lots of plans for activities (at work, school, or socially) or feel that you have to keep moving.

With dysthymia, symptoms drain the person’s energy and keep him or her from feeling good. Sometimes people with dysthymia have bouts of major depression.

3. Causes

- Some types of depression run in families.
- Brain chemicals imbalances.
- Life changes, such as the birth of a baby, divorce, retirement, job loss, and the death of a loved one.
- Hormonal and other changes, such as after having a baby (postpartum depression) or with menopause.
- Medical illnesses.
- Problems with others.
- Worries about money.
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This is due to a lack of natural sunlight in the fall and winter.

- Holiday “blues.”
- A side effect of medicines, such as some for high blood pressure. Some antidepressant medicines may increase suicidal thoughts and attempts, especially in children and teens. This is more likely to occur early in treatment or when changing a dose.

Most Likely, Major Depression Is Caused by a Mix of These Things:

- Family history of depression.
- Brain chemical imbalances.
- Emotional issues.
- Other factors, such as certain medical problems.

In some persons, life events, such as extreme stress and grief, may bring on depression. In others, depression occurs when life is going well.

4. Treatment

Too Often, People Don’t Get Help for Depression. They Don’t Get Help For Many Reasons:

- They don’t know they are depressed.
- They blame themselves for how they feel.
- They have a hard time asking for help.
- They don’t know what to do or where to go for help.

Why Get Help?

Over 80% of people with depression can be treated with success, usually in a short time. Here are good reasons to seek help:

- Depression is the most common cause of suicide.
- Elderly depressed people have higher rates of other chronic medical problems, such as heart disease.
- According to one study, severely depressed people are as disabled as those disabled with a chronic physical illness.
- Studies show a link between depression and a greater chance of getting ill in people of all ages.
- Social and family life suffer. Depressed people withdraw from others. Parents who are depressed have trouble relating to their children.
- The annual cost for treatment and lost wages due to depression is estimated at $43 to $53 billion a year.

Permafold® Topics

1. What is Depression?
2. Types & Symptoms
3. Causes
4. Treatment
5. Self-Care
6. Reason to Call Doctor or Health Care Provider
7. Reasons to Get Immediate Care

Depression: The Annual Cost for Treatment and Lost Wages Due to Depression Is Estimated at $43 to $53 Billion a Year.
Depression results from one of these things:

• Grief over the loss of a loved one does not start normal activities for more than 2 weeks.

• A medical problem.

• Taking over-the-counter or prescribed medicine.

• You withdraw from family and friends.

• You feel depressed now and one or more of these things apply:

You feel depressed now and one or more of these things apply:

• Your energy levels or your interest in things is low.

• You have been depressed before and did not get treatment.

• You have been treated (with or without medicines) for depression in the past and it has come back.

Any of these problems occur during holiday times:

• You withdraw from family and friends.

• You dwell on past holidays to the point that it interferes with your present life.

Depression doesn’t lift 2 weeks after having a baby.

Depression comes with dark, cloudy weather or winter months. It lifts when spring comes.

Symptoms of major depression occur. (See topic 2.)

Don’t use illegal drugs. Limit alcohol. These can cause or worsen depression. Drugs and alcohol can also make medicines for depression less effective. Happy side effects can happen if people also take alcohol and/or drugs are mixed with medicine.

Affective Disorder (SAD). This mild or moderate form of depression comes in the fall and winter.

Light therapy may help people who have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This mild or moderate form of depression comes in the fall and winter.

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