

Feeling Down?

You're not alone.

Depression affects 10% of men and 20% of women.

The following symptoms are commonly felt:

- You can't fall asleep, or you wake up and can't go back to sleep.
- You no longer enjoy food.
- You find yourself eating more or less than usual.
- You have gained or lost weight without trying.
- You have a hard time concentrating.
- You find it hard to sit still.
- You cannot make even simple decisions.
- You feel guilty or bad about yourself.
- You feel people would be better off without you.
- You think about suicide or about ways to hurt yourself.
- You no longer enjoy things like you once did.

If you experience any of these symptoms or have been feeling sad or hopeless for more than a few weeks, consult your doctor.

Getting Your Life and Health Back on Track

- **See Your Primary Doctor First** and rule out physical causes of depression-like symptoms, such as:
 - Excessive alcohol consumption
 - Side-effects of medications
 - Thyroid disorders
 - Electrolyte imbalances
 - Anemia (iron, folate, and vitamin B12 deficiencies)
- **Lift Your Spirits** by engaging in activities, such as:
 - **Join a support group:** Share your thoughts and feelings with others who also have the disease. Learn new skills to cope better.
 - **Be Active:** Just moving can work wonders for the way you feel.
 - **Talk to family members or friend(s):** Sharing your feelings can help release built-up emotions. Get their support for needed changes.
 - **Keep a journal of good things that happen each day:** Write down a poem or prayer that has meaning to you. Write out the many blessings that happen each day. Go back, and read those things whenever you're feeling blue.
 - **Plan to do something that you enjoy every day:** Go shopping, work in the garden, go for a walk in the park, or have lunch with friends.
 - **Volunteer or help others:** Volunteering helps us feel good about ourselves, that we're making a difference in someone else's life.

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- **See a Specialist for Help.** Seek help from specialists such as:
 - Psychologists
 - Psychiatric nurses
 - Social workers
 - Certified or licensed professional counselors
 - Psychiatrists
- **Antidepressants***. Consult your doctor about antidepressants commonly used to treat depression. Antidepressants can treat problems such as:
 - Chemical imbalances
 - Abnormal brain chemistry

However, keep the following in mind if taking antidepressants:

- Use alone
- Use along with therapy

***Some antidepressants may interfere with other medications**



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