

While the appropriate use of *prescribed* medications can help, avoid substances such as alcohol and drugs as they tend to act as depressants, often make things worse, and can increase the potential for completing suicide.

OTHER THINGS THAT CAN HELP

If you're struggling with depression, here are some additional things to try:

- ✓ join a support group
- ✓ volunteer/help someone else
- ✓ stay active/move your body
- ✓ learn something new/take a class/start a hobby
- ✓ spend time with others
- ✓ give yourself grace
- ✓ postpone making important life decisions
- ✓ share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns

KEEP IN MIND

As difficult as it is to navigate through the fog of depression, the journey itself can bring about strength, compassion, and even a greater capacity for peace. Don't walk this path alone. Find help, and give yourself grace during the process.



Depression Awareness
Health & Wellness

Depression Awareness

“Depression is feeling like you’ve lost something but having no clue when or where you last had it. Then one day you realize what you lost is yourself.”

~ Anonymous

Depression is a widespread mental illness that can happen to anyone, but it’s more common in people who have family members who suffer from it. It affects over 20 million people in the United States, 5% of the adult global population, more women than men, and goes beyond feeling sad or “down in the dumps” for a few days. Depression can also lead to suicide.

Depression can result from any number of factors—such as loss, change in life events, or even hormonal or health issues—and impacts every part of a person’s life. They may miss work or school or stop taking part in activities they once enjoyed.

DIAGNOSIS

Major depression (clinical depression) is a disorder of the brain characterized by an overwhelming feeling of sadness and/or a loss of interest and pleasure in usual activities along with at least 4 of the following symptoms:

- increase or decrease in appetite
- constant fatigue
- lack of or too much sleep
- fidgetiness or lethargy
- feeling worthless
- excessive guilt
- overwhelming feelings of anger and frustration

- difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- recurrent thoughts of death
- preoccupation with suicide (with or without specific plans)

A person doesn’t have to have all of these symptoms. Typically, if someone has several of them on **most days** for **at least two weeks**, a diagnosis is possible. However, certain medical conditions might need to be ruled out first. Hypothyroidism, anemia, and even Vitamin D deficiency can cause depression-like symptoms.

If you or someone you know is depressed, it’s important to reach out to a professional, such as a primary care doctor, counselor, or psychiatrist.

And if you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, please take this seriously and get help immediately by calling the suicide hotline at 988, dialing 911, or going to the emergency room.

TREATMENT

Depression is associated with visible changes in the brain’s shape and function. If left untreated, depression can have long-term effects. Proper treatment has been proven to have a significant positive impact on overall health and wellness.

For mild to moderate depression, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) can help rewire and reprogram a person’s brain to have more positive thoughts. For moderate to severe depression, CBT may need to be combined with medications.