

How Bad Are Your Blues?

There are times when all of us feel blue, sorrowful, or kind of down. True depression is more than this. It affects the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. Depression is not something that is imagined or “all in your head.” It is a common, treatable illness.

Some Signs of Depression

Depression has certain signs and symptoms. Mark the items that best tell how you have been feeling. Checking 5 or more items may indicate depression. Don't be afraid to discuss any of these feelings with your medical provider or clinic counselor.

- Feeling sad and/or irritable
- Not enjoying things that used to be fun (being with friends, sports, hobbies, sex)
- Unexpected changes in appetite and/or weight
- Unexpected changes in sleep patterns, sleeping too much, or not sleeping enough
- Feeling tired all the time and having no energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless
- Problems with concentration, memory, and decision-making
- Thinking about death or even trying to commit suicide

Understanding the Causes

Depression may result from chronic illness, difficult personal relationships, or money problems. It can run in families. Sometimes depression occurs for no reason. People who are depressed see themselves and the world in a negative way.

Treatment

Take a look at your lifestyle. Stress management, good support, and regular physical exercise can all help. You may need some medical attention along with professional counseling or “talk” therapy.

For more information call: National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at 1-800-421-4211 or your local crisis line

If you think your depression is severe and you have thoughts of hurting yourself, you should consult a mental health profession right away.