

National Health Observances

July

Family Reunion Month
National Make a Difference to Children Month
Bereaved Parents Month
National Parks & Recreation Month
National Grilling Month
Social Wellness Month

August

American Adventures Month
Happiness Happens Month
American Indian Heritage Month
What Will Your Legacy Be Month
Get Ready for Kindergarten Month
National Immunization Awareness Month

Week of August 1 - 7

Simplify Your Life Week
Single Working Womens Week

Week of August 8 - 14

Exercise with Your Children Week

Week of August 22 - 26

National Safe at Home Week

Week of August 25 - 31

Be Kind to Humankind Week

September

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
Baby Safety Month
College Savings Month
National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month
National Preparedness Month
National Self-Awareness Month

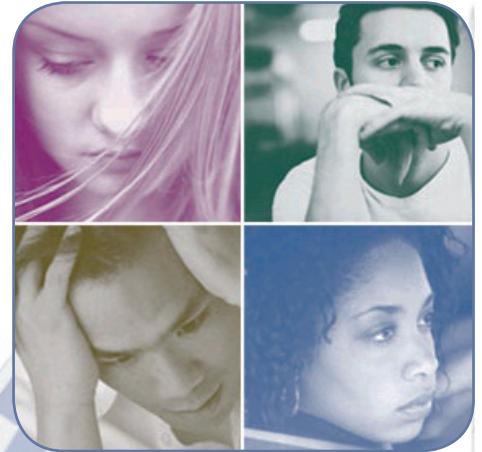
Depression: Understanding the Disorder

Depression is no mere slump in mood.

Unlike “the blues,” which tend to clear up in a few days, depression frequently is both prolonged and recurring. It can’t be ignored, and it can’t be joked or whistled away. Sufferers of depression are likely to experience:

- prolonged loss of interest in home, work and personal appearance.
- loss of interest in sexual activity.
- sudden changes and excesses in eating or sleeping habits.
- frequent, uncontrollable crying.
- lingering, unfocused nervousness or grouchiness.
- persistent feelings of hopelessness and futility.

There are both physical and psychological causes of depression. Illness and chemical imbalances are physical causes. Psychological or emotional causes include distressing or threatening changes—death of a loved one, divorce or loss of a job—and continuing problems of emotional dependency and inadequate self-esteem.



Untreated, depression can be debilitating and can lead to suicide. It’s a serious condition requiring serious treatment.

Treatment for Depression

If you suspect you suffer depression, having a medical checkup is your first step. Even depression with emotional causes may call for treatment with medication, and that’s a decision that must be made by a doctor who, in turn, must know the state of your physical health.

If your depression has a physical cause, treating the underlying illness may be the cure. Depression resulting from chemical imbalance can also be treated medically.

A Checklist for Depression

What's the difference between a bad case of the blues and the painful mental disorder known as depression? According to the experts, impaired functioning is usually a clear-cut indication of clinical depression.

Here's a quick checklist of depression symptoms. If the list sounds familiar, you may want to see a counselor or a psychiatrist.

- **Depressive Mood:** Do you suffer from feelings of gloom, helplessness or pessimism for days at a time?
- **Sleep Disturbance:** Do you have trouble falling asleep at night or trouble staying asleep -- waking up in the middle of the night or too early in the morning? Are you sleeping too much?
- **Chronically fatigued:** Do you frequently feel tired or lack energy?
- **Isolation:** Have you stopped meeting friends for lunch? Are you ever afraid to leave the house? Increasing isolation and diminished interest or pleasure in activities are major signs of depression.
- **Appetite Disturbance:** Are you eating far less than usual -- or far more? Severe and continuing appetite disturbance is often an indication of depression.
- **Inability to Concentrate:** If you can't seem to focus on even routine tasks, it's probably time to get some help.
- **Dependence on Mood-Altering Substances:** If you depend on alcohol or other drugs to make it through the day, you may be suffering from depression. Often the substance abuse causes symptoms which mimic the appearance of clinical depression, but are in fact due wholly to the drug use.
- **Feeling a sense of inappropriate guilt or worthlessness.**
- **Recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal idealization / attempt.**



Depression....continued from Page 1

Especially among elderly people, combinations of medications taken for various medical needs can produce depression. A doctor will want to get a complete list of all medicines you've been taking.

If your depression is traceable to an event or situation, professional counseling or therapy may be helpful. Call your EAP for a referral to a counselor or therapist.

Self-Care Tips

In addition to seeking professional help, there are some things you can do which may help you feel better. Follow a healthy, well rounded diet, and get regular exercise. Aerobic

exercise, such as walking, bicycling and swimming, is recommended.

Scientists theorize that such exercise releases "feel good" hormones in the brain which can lift your spirits and help you feel more optimistic and emotionally in control. Again, these are often beneficial, but they're not an alternative to professional attention. Talk to a health professional.

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