

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Treatment Options

There are two main treatments for moderate to severe depression. These treatments include anti-depressant medication and psychological therapy (also known as talking therapy). These two methods have been proven to be equally effective.

Anti-depressant medication: Depression causes changes in brain chemistry and this alters how an individual responds to everyday life. Anti-depressants restore the chemical balance in the brain. There are a variety of medications that are currently used to treat depression. Depending on your needs and situation, a health care professional will need to find which type of medication is most suitable for you. Your symptoms, medical history, and family history often help when trying to decide on your proper medication. By discussing your options with a health care professional, you will find which medication works best for you. These medications relieve anxiety, tiredness, poor appetite and poor concentration.

Psychological therapy: Talking with a trained health care professional can be just as effective as medications. Psychological therapy involves talking honestly to a therapist about your feelings and how you relate to others. Therapists work hard to understand your situation then help find a way to deal with your depression. Many times talking therapy is used in combination with medication. This is best done when treating an individual with severe depression.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DEPRESSION

Here are some things you can do to protect yourself from getting depressed:

- Exercise and stay healthy
- Refrain from using alcohol or drugs
- Sleep regularly
- Spend time with friends and loved ones
- Stay involved in activities you enjoy doing
- Learn to problem-solve and communicate effectively



GETTING HELP!

Additional Resources

Need more help? Looking for more information? Here are a few websites you can visit to learn more about depression.

- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: www.dbsalliance.org
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America: www.adaa.org
- All about Depression: www.allaboutdepression.com
- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org
- Mental Health America: www.mentalhealthamerica.net

DEPRESSION



STAY SAFE SERIES

© 2014 PRIMO PREVENTION, LLC • PO Box 371 • Reserve, LA 70084
985-359-7848 • www.primoprevention.com • PSS-MH-12

A HELPLESS FEELING

SADNESS AND DEPRESSION

What's the Difference?

Sadness is a reaction to the difficulties that occur in our life and it is a natural human emotion. Everyone experiences sadness. We may get sad over an argument with our parents, a breakup or even doing poorly on a big test. Most of the time, people are able to cope with these emotions and move past them, but sometimes people struggle.

Depression is a disorder characterized by intense feelings of sadness, discouragement, despair or hopelessness. These emotions last for weeks, months or possibly longer. Each year, approximately 14.8 million Americans suffer from depression.

TYPES OF DEPRESSION

There are many different types of clinical depression. Some of the most common include:

Major depression – This is one of the most common forms of depression. This form of depression comes with severe symptoms that interfere with an individual's daily life, making it difficult for them to work, sleep, eat and enjoy life. Episodes of major depression can happen several times in one's life and can last from 6 to 12 months.

Dysthymia – Dysthymia is a low-grade depression that lasts for a long period of time. Symptoms usually last for at least two years. Individuals suffering from dysthymia lose interest in normal daily activities, have low self-esteem and experience an overall feeling of inadequacy. Individuals suffering from dysthymia are described as being critical, constantly complaining and incapable of enjoying life.

Atypical depression – Most people dealing with depression experience symptoms like not being able to sleep, eat and concentrate. Individuals suffering from atypical depression experience reversed symptoms. These symptoms include overeating, oversleeping and they seem to brighten up when they hear good news. Many times these people do not realize they are depressed.

Manic Depression – Manic depression, also known as bipolar disorder, is a disorder that causes shifts in mood and it affects the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. This depression involves cycles of depression and elation or mania.

RISK FACTORS

Although anyone can be affected by depression, there are some factors that may increase your chances of becoming depressed.

Gender – Women are about 70% more likely than men to become depressed. It is estimated that one out of every four women experiences depression during their lifetime. Researchers believe that this may be due to hormonal changes, social and cultural problems and the stress of balancing work, parent-hood and caregiving.

Family History – Having a family member who has suffered from depression increases the likelihood that you may be affected as well. Research shows that depression is most likely a result of both genetics and other life factors.

Substance Abuse – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have said that one-fifth of all individuals suffering with depression also suffer with substance abuse. Abusing drugs and alcohol causes chemical changes in the brain. These changes make it more likely for a person to become depressed.

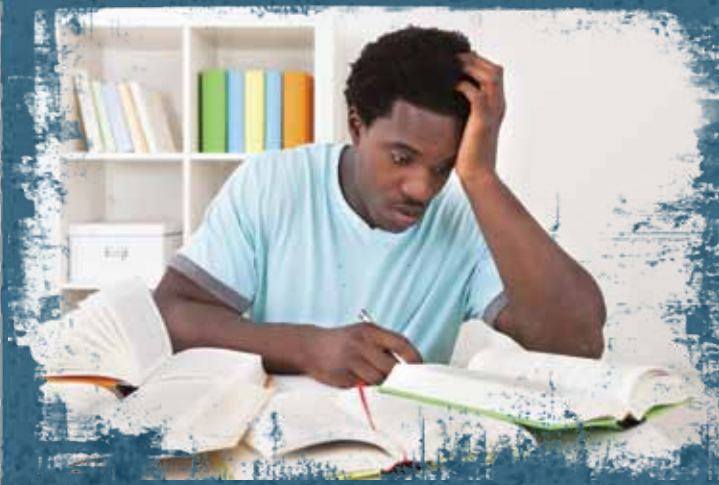
Life events – Major life events, both good and bad, can raise the risk of becoming depressed. Going through a divorce, having a child, losing a loved one, getting fired from a job and even buying a new house can all lead to depression.

Medications – There are several medications such as prescription blood pressure medications, sleeping pills, sedatives, steroids and pain killers that have been associated with depression.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

Signs of Depression

- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased irritability and restlessness
- Feeling guilty, worthless and/or helpless
- A change in sleeping patterns
- A change in appetite, significant weight gain or loss
- Dropping old friends and favorite activities
- Persistent sadness
- Expressing thoughts of dying or suicide



OVERLOADED

Marcus's Story

Marcus was a great kid, liked by everyone. He was involved at school, had lots of friends and he just received a full academic scholarship to his favorite college. Marcus dreamed of becoming a doctor and the way things were going, he was well on his way.

After graduation, Marcus moved away to college. College was across the country, thousands of miles away from his close friends and family. This didn't settle well with him. At college, Marcus devoted much of his time to studying which made it tough for him to make friends. During this time he felt very lonely and sad. Marcus started having trouble sleeping and over a period of just 3 weeks he lost 15 pounds. Also, he found he was having a hard time concentrating on his school work and his grades reflected this.

When Marcus came home to visit during Christmas break he barely spoke to anyone. He spent most of his time locked in his bedroom. His parents immediately knew something wasn't right. After confronting Marcus, he and his parents decided it was best for him to visit a health care professional. At the doctor, Marcus was diagnosed with depression disorder.

After a few months of treatment that involved psychological therapy, Marcus was back to his old self. He returned back to school and decided to manage his time better. At college, Marcus is now making the grades he needs for medical school while still having time to hang out with his new friends.

