

## **DEPRESSION – Symptoms and Treatments**

- **WHAT IS DEPRESSION?**

- Everyone feels sad or low sometimes, but these feelings usually pass with a little time. Depression (also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is different. It can cause severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. It is an illness that can affect anyone—regardless of age, race, income, culture, or education. Research suggests that genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors play a role in depression.

- **What are the signs and symptoms of depression?**

- Common symptoms of depression include:
  - ✓ Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
  - ✓ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
  - ✓ Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness
  - ✓ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
  - ✓ Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities
  - ✓ Decreased energy, fatigue, or being “slowed down.”
  - ✓ Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
  - ✓ Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, or oversleeping.
  - ✓ Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes
  - ✓ Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and that do not ease even with treatment.
  - ✓ Suicide attempts or thoughts of death or suicide

- **How is depression treated?**

Depression treatment typically involves medication, psychotherapy, or both. If these treatments do not reduce symptoms, brain stimulation therapy may be another treatment option. In milder cases of depression, treatment might begin

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with psychotherapy alone, and medication added if the individual continues to experience symptoms. For moderate or severe depression, many mental health professionals recommend a combination of medication and therapy at the start of treatment.

Choosing the right treatment plan should be based on a person's individual needs and medical situation under a provider's care. It may take some trial and error to find the treatment that works best for you. You can learn more about the different types of treatment, including psychotherapy, medication, and brain stimulation therapies on the NIMH's depression webpage:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression>

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