

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DEPRESSION

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine

## What Is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that causes feelings of sadness. It makes it hard to do or enjoy regular activities and can cause problems in your life. It is different from feeling down or blue for a few days because it does not go away. Depression can last for weeks, months, or sometimes even years. You may be at risk for depression if you:

- Are dependent on alcohol
- Have a chronic medical condition
- Are female
- Have a personal or family history of depression
- Have given birth recently
- Had a stressful event happen recently

## What Are the Warning Signs?

- Sadness that lasts for a long time
- Feeling less interested in things you used to enjoy
- Unintentional weight loss
- Weight gain
- Changes in usual appetite
- Changes in sleep
- Feeling tired every day
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Trouble concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

## How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you questions about your medical history and how you feel. These will include questions about your mood and behavior.
- Your doctor will review any medicines that you are taking.

## How Is It Treated?

- There are treatments for depression that can help most people feel better. You and your doctor will discuss what treatment options are best for you. The type of treatment will depend on how severe your depression is.
- Seeing a therapist for talk therapy or counseling can help.
- You may be prescribed an antidepressant medicine. These medicines can have adverse effects. You may have to try different medicines to find the one that works best for you.



- Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel like you may harm yourself or need help, call 911 or go to the emergency room right away.

## Questions for My Doctor

- How do I know if I'm depressed or just blue?
- Do I need medicine to treat my depression?
- How will seeing a therapist help my depression?
- Will any lifestyle changes help with my symptoms of depression?
- Do alternative therapies help with depression?
- What should I do if treatment doesn't make me feel better?

## Bottom Line

- Depression is a mood disorder that makes you feel sad.
- People with depression may feel guilty or worthless, unable to enjoy things that they used to enjoy, and withdrawn from friends and family.
- Your doctor will discuss your medical history and talk with you about your feelings.
- Treatment for depression can include talking to a therapist and taking antidepressant medicines. Talk to your doctor about your options and what is best for you.
- Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away if you feel like you may harm yourself or need help. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## For More Information



ACP

[www.acponline.org/patient\\_ed/mental\\_health](http://www.acponline.org/patient_ed/mental_health)

National Institute of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-what-you-need-to-know-12-2015/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-what-you-need-to-know-12-2015/index.shtml)