

FACT SHEET

Depression: It can affect anyone

October is National Depression Education and Awareness Month



What Is Depression?

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings are usually fleeting and pass within a couple of days. When a person has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning and causes pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about him or her. Depression is a common but serious illness, and most who experience it need treatment to get better.

Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the vast majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment. Intensive research into the illness has resulted in the development of medications, psychotherapies and other methods to treat people with this disabling disorder.

What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

People with depressive illnesses do not all experience the same symptoms. The severity, frequency and duration of symptoms will vary depending on the individual and his or her particular illness. Symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment

What should I do if I think I may be depressed?

Call your local health clinic to make an appointment with your primary care provider or stop by the behavioral health clinic to talk to someone.

Information for this fact sheet was taken from the National Institute of Mental Health. For more, visit www.nimh.nih.gov.