



---

## Depression: Signs and Symptoms

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Feeling sad, hopeless, and helpless
- Feeling guilty and/or worthless
- Thinking negative thoughts
- Having a loss of interest in things, such as social activities, hobbies, and sex

Still not sure? Ask yourself these questions.

1. Have you had a loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities most of the day, nearly everyday for at least 2 weeks?

2. Has depression interfered with daily activities for more than 2 weeks and/or have you withdrawn from normal activities during this time?

3. Have you been in a depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day for at least 2 weeks, and had any 4 of the following symptoms for at least 2 weeks?

- Feeling slowed down or restless and unable to sit still
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Changes in appetite or weight loss or gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Problems concentrating, thinking, remembering, or making decisions
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Loss of energy or feeling tired all of the time
- Headaches
- Other aches and pains
- Digestive problems
- Sexual problems
- Feeling pessimistic or hopeless
- Being anxious or worried



## Depression Self-Care: Prevention

### To overcome Mild, Situational Depression:

- Be with positive people. They'll lift your morale.
- Do something to help someone else. This will focus your attention away from yourself.
- Eat healthy foods. Eat at regular times.
- Get some physical activity every day.
- Talk to someone who will listen to the tensions and frustrations you are feeling.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. These can cause or worsen depression.
- Do something that lets you express yourself. Write. Paint. Write your thoughts in a diary or journal.
- Relax. Listen to soft music, take a warm bath or shower. Do relaxation exercises.
- Do something you enjoy, even if you don't feel like it. Watch a funny TV show or movie.
- Avoid stressful situations or taking on added commitments when you feel depressed.
- Don't take over-the-counter herbs for depression, such as St. John's Wort, on your own. Consult your health care provider first.

### To help a friend who is depressed:

- Help your friend get an appropriate diagnosis. Make an initial appointment with a professional. Offer to take your friend to the appointment.
- Do not ignore remarks about suicide. Report them, immediately, to a supervisor or health care provider.
- Be aware of the type of medication your friend needs to take and when it should be taken. If necessary alert your friend's health care provider about any side effects that you notice.
- Be supportive. Depression is no different from any other physical illness. It requires patience, understanding, love and encouragement. Encourage your friend to continue with treatment and to see his or her health care provider if there is no improvement.
- Listen with care. Encourage your friend to talk about his or her feelings. Point out your friend's successes and attributes when he or she feels worthless, helpless, or down about the future. Helping your friend see previous successes can help give the confidence needed to continue with treatment. Your friend doesn't need you to tell him or her what to do. Listening is very helpful.
- Encourage your friend to go out and do things with you or with others, such as to see a movie or to do things your friend enjoyed in the past. Don't push, though, or make too many demands.