



INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT

# DEPRESSION

## Mindfulness meditation to treat depression

### Key Points:

- The amount of research on mindfulness meditation for the treatment of depression is small when compared to the large amount of information on the use of prescription medication and psychotherapy for the same problem. Therefore, conclusions about mindfulness meditation are more uncertain.
- Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which are structured eight-week programs with manuals, have been the most extensively studied.
- Existing research indicates that mindfulness-based interventions may enhance well-being and may be as effective as medication or psychotherapy in the treatment of depression.
- The positive effects of mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to last for up to one year. More practice is associated with better outcome.
- Mindfulness meditation might be particularly useful to prevent a relapse of depression and preliminary research suggests MBCT may be particularly helpful for people with a history of multiple depressive episodes.
- Because of the limited amount of high quality research support, some experts have suggested that mindfulness-based interventions should be used together with other (better-established) psychological or medication treatments.

# DEPRESSION

## Considering treatment with mindfulness meditation

- If you are considering treatment with meditation it would be helpful to discuss this with your family doctor.
- If your doctor is not familiar with meditation, he or she may be able to refer you to a specialist who can advise you.
- Many research findings are based on studies in which participants attended group classes for 8 to 10 weeks and, in addition, were asked to practice at home, building up to 45 to 60 minutes each day.
- In order to be helpful, mindfulness meditation requires daily practice and more practice is associated with better outcomes.
- It is recommended that you work with a qualified instructor or therapist to make sure mindfulness meditation is suitable for you.

Despite the promise of meditation for the treatment of depression, more high quality research is needed to be sure of how helpful it is in treatment.

## Recommended books:

**These books may be available in your local library or bookstore and may be ordered through internet book sellers:**

Teasdale, J.D., & Segal, Z.V. (2007). *The mindful way through depression: Freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness*. New York: Guilford Press.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. New York: Bantam Dell.

**Disclaimer:** Information in this pamphlet is offered 'as is' and is meant only to provide general information that supplements, but does not replace the information from your health provider. Always contact a qualified health professional for further information in your specific situation or circumstance.

INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT

# DEPRESSION

For more fact sheets and information about depression and its treatment please visit: <http://depression.informedchoices.ca>

You are free to copy and distribute this material in its entirety as long as 1) this material is not used in any way that suggests we endorse you or your use of the material, 2) this material is not used for commercial purposes (non-commercial), 3) this material is not altered in any way (no derivative works). View full license at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca/>

**Source:** This summary provides scientifically accurate information. It was prepared in a research review by researchers and young adults with the Mobilizing Minds Research Group. The researchers are based at six universities: Manitoba, York, McMaster, Brock, Brandon, and Université Laval. Our core community partner is mindyourmind.ca located in London, Ontario. Our young adult team members are located all across the country. Last revised: 10 January 2014.

**Acknowledgement:** Preparation of this material was supported by funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of these organizations.

## References:

Edenfield, T. M., & Saeed, A. (2012). An update on mindfulness meditation as a self-help treatment for anxiety and depression. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 5*, 131-141.

Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E.M., Gould, N.F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., . . . Haythornwaite, J.A. (2014). Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.13018 [Epub ahead of print]

Khoury, B., Lecomte, T., Masse, M., Therien, P., Bouchard, V., . . . Hofmann, S.G. (2013). Mindfulness-based therapy: A comprehensive meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review, 33*, 763-771.

Luberto, C. M., White, C., Sears, R. W., & Cotton, S. (2013). Integrative medicine for treating depression: An update on the latest evidence. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 14*(391).

Marchand, W. R. (2013). Mindfulness meditation practices as adjunctive treatments for psychiatric disorders. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 36*(1), 141-152.