



INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT

DEPRESSION

What is depression?

Key Points:

- Feelings of sadness are a normal part of life. These feelings usually last only a few hours or days before they gradually disappear on their own.
- When feelings of sadness last two weeks or longer, affect most areas of your life, and stop you from enjoying the things you usually like, you may be experiencing depression.
- More than 1 in 20 people will have serious problems with depression each year.
- Depression is very common in young adults. More than 1 in 10 experience a problem with depression in any year. Even more young adults experience high levels of emotional distress.
- If you are depressed, it's important to talk to someone you trust such as a friend or family member. Consider seeking the help of a professional who knows how to help with depression.
- Some people feel awful but do not realize that they are having problems with depression.

Depression can be treated successfully. Getting help with depression allows people to get their life back to normal quickly.

What is depression?

Key symptoms of depression that are present most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks are:

- Depressed mood and/or
- Greatly reduced interest or pleasure in most activities



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In addition, several of these symptoms are present nearly every day. Not everyone with depression has all of these symptoms:

- Loss of interest in activities you enjoy or withdrawal from usual activities
- Decrease or increase in appetite compared to usual
- Sleeping much less or much more than usual
- Problems concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling very tired and weak or very low on energy
- Feeling worthless or guilty (not just guilt about feeling depressed)
- Feeling restless or slowed down – so much that other people notice it
- Family members or friends notice that you are not your usual self and that your mood is low
- Thinking a lot about suicide and/or death (not just fear of death)

Other common experiences are:

- Increased irritability
- Decreased motivation
- Feeling less interested in sex

Depression becomes more common during the teenage years and is especially common in young adult years when people are going through many life changes. Twice as many women as men report problems with depression. It is a common problem throughout the adult years.

People who are having problems with depression often have other problems at the same time such as anxiety (nervousness, fears, worries) or problems with excessive use of alcohol or drugs.

Disclaimer: Information in this pamphlet is provided for educational purposes only. Always consult a qualified health care professional for your specific care.

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How do I get help?

In Crisis Now?

- If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or harming themselves, go to the nearest hospital, call 9-1-1 or contact your local crisis line. The following websites provide a list of crisis lines across Canada:
 - <http://www.suicideprevention.ca/in-crisis-now/find-a-crisis-centre-now/>
 - <http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/find-help/>

If you're not in crisis but want to talk to someone:

- If you're not in crisis, but would like to talk to someone about your feelings of depression and treatment options, speak to your family doctor, school counselor, or Employee Assistance Program if you have one through your work. They will be able to help you find the professional help that best meets your needs; and can provide a referral.
- Call or visit your local **Canadian Mental Health Association** or **Mood Disorders Association**. They can connect you to help and resources.
 - <http://www.cmha.ca/get-involved/find-your-cmha/>
 - <http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/page/finding-help>
- Visit <http://www.ementalhealth.ca/> to find mental health services help and support in your community.
- Some medical clinics have their own counselors.
- If these resources are not available to you, consider going to a walk-in clinic.

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



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