

Depression

Each person has specific toxic exposures along with dietary and genetic weaknesses that are causing their symptoms. Toxic exposures can be inorganic like heavy metals, DDT, VOC's, Radio-active waste and any other chemical-like food additives or pesticides and fertilizers sprayed on the foods. They can also be organic or living organisms like parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi. All the different possible combinations make it difficult to accurately address issues unless you have experienced medical professionals mapping through all your different clinical symptoms.

Dr. Marilyn Tucker founded The Vibrant Health Community to do Symptom Mapping to be able to bring a completely personalized plan for each person. When you join the Vibrant Health Community you have your own medical team of doctor, pharmacist and health coach. This Team specializes in Integrative-Complementary Medicine. They will work with your personal physician to bring you to a place of as much natural healing as your body will allow. For those of you that have health issues that require prescription medications, your Team can help introduce natural measures that can reduce the imbalances and complications that inevitably come with prescription medication. This can reduce side effects and possible additional drugs having to be introduced.

Definition

Depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods.

True clinical depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period of time.

See also:

- [Adolescent depression](#)
- [Depression in the elderly](#)

Alternative Names

Blues; Discouragement; Gloom; Mood changes; Sadness; Melancholy

Considerations

Depression is generally ranked in terms of severity -- mild, moderate, or severe. The degree of your depression, which your doctor can determine, influences how you are treated. Symptoms of depression include:

- Trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping
- A dramatic change in appetite, often with weight gain or loss
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-hate, and inappropriate guilt
- Extreme difficulty concentrating
- Agitation, restlessness, and irritability
- Inactivity and withdrawal from usual activities
- Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

Low self esteem is common with depression. So are sudden bursts of anger and lack of pleasure from activities that normally make you happy, including sex.

Depressed children may not have the classic symptoms of adult depression. Watch especially for changes in school performance, sleep, and behavior. If you wonder whether your child might be depressed, it's worth bringing to a doctor's attention.

The main types of depression include:

- Major depression -- five or more symptoms listed above must be present for at least 2 weeks, but major depression tends to continue for at least 6 months. (Depression is classified as minor depression if you have *fewer* than five depression symptoms for at least 2 weeks. In other words, minor depression is similar to major depression except it only has 2 - 4 symptoms.)
- Dysthymia -- a generally milder form of depression that lasts as long as two years.
- Atypical depression -- depression accompanied by unusual symptoms, such as hallucinations (for example, hearing voices that are not really there) or delusions (irrational thoughts).

Other common forms of depression include:

- Postpartum depression -- many women feel somewhat down after having a baby, but true postpartum depression is rare.
- Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) -- depressive symptoms occur one week prior to menstruation and disappear after you menstruate.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) -- occurs during the fall-winter season and disappears during the spring-summer season. Likely to be due to lack of sunlight.

Depression may also occur with mania (known as manic-depression or bipolar disorder). In this condition, moods cycle between mania and depression.

Depression is more common in women than men and is especially common during the teen years. Men seem to seek help for feelings of depression less often than women. Therefore, women may only have more *documented* cases of depression.

Common Causes

Depression often runs in families. This may be due to your genes (inherited), learned behavior, or both. Even if your genes make you more likely to develop depression, a stressful or unhappy life event usually triggers the onset of a depressive episode.

Depression may be brought on by:

- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Childhood events like abuse or neglect
- Chronic stress
- Death of a friend or relative
- Disappointment at home, work, or school (in teens, this may be breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, failing a class, or parents divorcing)
- Drugs such as sedatives and high blood pressure medications
- Medical conditions such as hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), cancer, or hepatitis
- Nutritional deficiencies (such as a lack of folate and omega-3 fatty acids)
- Overly negative thoughts about one's self and life, self blame, and ineffective social problem solving skills
- Prolonged pain or having a major illness
- Sleeping problems
- Social isolation (common in the elderly)

Home Care

If you are depressed for 2 weeks or longer, you should contact your doctor, who can offer treatment options. Regardless of whether you have mild or major depression, the following self-care steps can help:

- Get enough sleep.
- Follow a healthy, nutritious diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid alcohol, marijuana, and other recreational drugs.
- Get involved in activities that make you happy, even if you don't feel like it.

- Spend time with family and friends.
- Try talking to clergy or spiritual advisors who may help give meaning to painful experiences.
- Consider prayer, meditation, tai chi, or biofeedback as ways to relax or draw on your inner strengths.
- Add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet, which you can get from cold-water fish like tuna, salmon, or mackerel.
- Take folate (vitamin B9) in the form of a multivitamin (400 to 800 micrograms).

If your depression occurs in the fall or winter months, try light therapy using a special lamp that mimics the sun.

Many people try a popular over-the-counter herb called St. John's Wort. Some studies do suggest that this herbal remedy may be helpful for mild depression, but not moderate or severe. Be aware that St. John's Wort has potential drug interactions and should NOT be taken with prescription antidepressants, birth control pills, protease inhibitors for HIV, theophylline, warfarin, digoxin, reserpine, cyclosporine, or loperamide. Talk to your doctor if you are thinking about trying this herb for mild depression.

If you have moderate to severe depression, the most effective treatment plan will likely be a combination of counseling and medication.

Call your health care provider if

Call 911, a suicide hotline, or get safely to a nearby emergency room if you have thoughts of suicide, a suicidal plan, or thoughts of harming yourself or others.

Call your doctor right away if:

- You hear voices that are not there
- You have frequent crying spells with little or no provocation
- You have had feelings of depression that disrupt work, school, or family life for longer than 2 weeks
- You have 3 or more depressive symptoms
- You think that one of your current medications may be making you feel depressed -- DO NOT change or stop any medications without consulting your doctor
- You believe that you should cut back on drinking, a family member or friend has asked you to cut back, you feel guilty about the amount of alcohol you drink, or you drink alcohol first thing in the morning

Prevention

Healthy lifestyle habits can help prevent depression, or lessen the chances of it happening again. These habits include eating properly, sleeping adequately, exercising regularly, learning to relax, and not drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Counseling may help you through times of grief, stress, or low mood. Family therapy may be particularly important for teens who feel blue.

If you feel socially isolated or lonely, try volunteering or getting involved in group activities.

References

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