

Facts about Depression

What is Depression?

Depression is a medical illness. When low mood or sadness persists or interferes with everyday life, it may be depression. Depression can last months or even years if not treated.

What Are the Symptoms of Depression?

Key Symptoms:

- Depressed or sad mood
- Decreased interest or pleasure in activities

Other Symptoms:

- Significant changes in appetite or weight
- Sleep disturbances
- Restlessness or sluggishness
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Lack of concentration or indecision
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

What Causes Depression?

Depression is a medical illness with multiple causes including biological, psychological, social and medical factors. The symptoms of depression may reflect an imbalance in brain chemistry and may be brought about by genetics, stress or loss, or other physical changes co-occurring with medical illnesses. Sometimes depression can develop without any obvious cause.

How is Depression Treated?

Depression is treatable. Appropriate treatment, such as medication or psychotherapy, relieves symptoms for most individuals. Engaging in pleasurable and rewarding activities has also been shown to improve depression.