



**National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences,
NIMHANS, Bengaluru-560029**
(Institute of National Importance)

Depression



Do you feel very sad, hopeless, and helpless ?
Are you having trouble working, sleeping?
Do you feel life is not worth living?
Have you felt this way for a long time?

If so, you may have **DEPRESSION**.

What is depression?

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but these feelings usually pass after a few some days. When you have depression, you have trouble with daily life for weeks at a time. Depression is a medical illness that needs prompt treatment

What are the different forms of depression?

There are several forms of depression.

Major depression—severe symptoms that interfere with your ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy life. An episode can occur only once in a person's lifetime, but more often, a person has several episodes.

Dysthymic disorder, or dysthymia—depressive symptoms that last a long time (2 years or longer) but are less severe than those of major depression.

Minor depression—similar to major depression and dysthymia, but symptoms are less severe and may not last as long.

What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

Each person may report of different symptoms. Some symptoms include:

- Feeling sad or “empty”
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious, or guilty
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feeling very tired
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or not wanting to eat at all
- Death wishes, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

•Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems.

What causes depression?

Several factors, or a combination of factors, may cause depression.

Genes—people with a family history of depression may be more likely to develop it than those whose families do not have the illness.

Brain chemistry—people with depression have different brain chemistry than those without the illness.

Stress—loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship, or any stressful situation may trigger depression.

Does depression look the same in everyone?

No. Depression can exhibit in different ways for different people.

Women experience depression more often than men. Biological, life cycle, and hormonal factors that are unique to women may be linked to women's higher depression rate. Women with depression may report symptoms of sadness, worthlessness, and guilt.

Men with depression are more likely to be very tired, irritable, and sometimes even angry. They may lose interest in work or activities they once enjoyed, and have sleep problems.

Older adults with depression may have less obvious symptoms, or they may be less likely to admit to feelings of sadness or grief. They may mask depression by reporting of various aches and pains. They also are more likely to have medical conditions like heart disease or stroke, which may cause or

contribute to depression.

Children with depression may pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school or withdraw. Older children or teens may get into trouble at school and be irritable.

How is depression treated?

The first step to getting the right treatment is to visit a doctor or mental health professional. He or she can do an exam or lab tests to rule out other conditions that may have the same symptoms as depression. He or she can also tell if certain medications you are taking may be affecting your mood.

The doctor should get a complete history of symptoms, including when they started, how long they have lasted, and how bad they are. He or she should also know whether they have occurred before, and if so, how they were treated. He or she should also ask if there is a history of depression in your family.

Medications called antidepressants can work well to treat depression. They will take few weeks to work. Antidepressants can have side effects including:

- Headache
- Nausea—feeling sick to your stomach
- Difficulty sleeping or nervousness
- Agitation or restlessness
- Sexual problems.

Most side effects come down over time. **Talk to your doctor about any side effects that are bothering you and which needs to be addressed at the earliest.**

Electroconvulsive therapy. For some, the depression can turn severe and may not respond to

medications, then electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is sometimes used. It can provide relief for people for whom other treatments have not worked. ECT may cause temporary side effects such as confusion and memory loss.

How can I help a loved one who is depressed?

If you know someone who has depression, first help him or her see a doctor or mental health professional as early as possible.

- Offer unconditional support, understanding, and encouragement.
 - Talk to him or her, and listen carefully.
 - Be alert to reports of death wishes, and report to the therapist or doctor.
 - Encourage him or her out for walks, recreation, and other activities.
 - Remind him or her that with time and treatment, the depression will get better
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How can I help myself if I am depressed?

As you are on treatment, you will start feeling better. Remember that the antidepressant takes few weeks for it to start working. Try to do things that you used to enjoy before you had depression. Other things that may help include:

- Breaking up large tasks into small ones, and doing what you can as you can. Try not to do too many things at once.
- Spending time with other people and talking to a friend or relative about your feelings.
- Once you have a treatment plan given by you

doctor or therapist, try to stick to it.

- Do not make important life decisions until you feel better.
 - Be consistent in meeting your doctor or therapist
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Where can I go for help?

If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your family doctor. You can also check the phone book or google for mental health professionals.

What if I or someone I know is in crisis?

If you or someone you know is in crisis, get help quickly.

- Call your doctor.
 - Call 108 for ambulance services.
 - Go to the nearest hospital emergency room.
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