

Depression



What Is Depression?

Depression is a disorder of the brain that makes you feel sad. It makes it hard to do or enjoy regular activities and can cause problems in your life. It is different from feeling down or blue for a few days because it does not go away. Depression can last for weeks, months or sometimes even years.



What Are the Warning Signs of Depression?

- Sadness that lasts for a long time
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Feeling negative or like you do not care about anything in life
- Constant irritability, anger, agitation, or anxiety
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to enjoy past interests
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Constant lack of energy
- Major changes in appetite and sleep
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide



How Is Depression Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you questions about your medical history and how you feel, including questions about your mood and behavior.
- Your doctor will perform a physical examination and review any medicines that you are taking.
- Laboratory tests may be ordered to help rule out other causes for the way that you feel.



How Is Depression Treated?

- You and your doctor will discuss what treatment options are best for you.
- Talking to a therapist for talk therapy or counseling can help.
- You may be prescribed an antidepressant medicine. You may have to try different medicines to find the one that works best for you. Don't stop your medicine without checking with your doctor, even if you don't think it is working.

Atrial Fibrillation



Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel like you may want to harm yourself or need help, call 911 or go to the emergency room right away.

Questions for My Doctor

- How do I know if I'm depressed or just blue?
- Do I need medicine to treat my depression?
- How will seeing a therapist help my depression?
- Will any lifestyle changes help with my symptoms of depression?
- Do alternative therapies help with depression?
- What should I do if treatment doesn't make me feel better?



Bottom Line

- Depression is a disorder of the brain that makes you feel sad.
- People with depression may feel guilty or worthless, unable to enjoy things that they used to enjoy, and withdrawn from friends and family.
- Your doctor will discuss your medical history and talk with you about your feelings. Laboratory tests may be ordered to rule out conditions that could be causing your symptoms.
- Treatment for depression can include talking to a therapist and antidepressant medicines. Talk to your doctor about your options and what is best for you.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel like you may want to harm yourself or need help, call 911 or go to the emergency room right away.

For More Information

- **ACP:** www.acponline.org/patients_families/products/health_tips/dep_en.pdf
- **MedlinePLUS:** www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/depression.html
- **National Institutes of Mental Health:** www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml

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