

Clinical depression is a serious illness that can affect anybody, including teenagers. It can affect your thoughts, feelings, behavior, and overall health.



Most people with depression can be helped with treatment. But a majority of depressed people never get the help they need. And, when depression isn't treated, it can get worse, last longer, and prevent you from getting the most out of this important time in your life.

So, listen up:

Here's how to tell if you or a friend might be depressed. First, there are two kinds of depressive illness: the sad kind, called major depression, and manic-depression or bipolar disorder, when feeling down and depressed alternates with being speeded-up and sometimes reckless.



Let's get serious here

Having depression doesn't mean that a person is weak, a failure, or isn't really trying – it means they need treatment..

Most people with depression can be helped with psychotherapy, medicine, or both together. Short-term Psychotherapy means talking about feelings with a trained professional who can help you change the relationships, thoughts, or behaviors that contribute to depression.



Medication has been developed that effectively treats depression that is severe or disabling. Antidepressant medications are not "uppers" and are not addictive. Sometimes, several types may have to be tried before you and your doctor find the one that works best. Treatment can help most depressed people start to feel better in just a few weeks.



So remember, when your problems seem too big and you're feeling low for too long, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.** There's help out there and you can ask for help.

Approximately 4 percent of adolescents get seriously depressed each year.

What you need to know about suicide

Most people who are depressed do not kill themselves. But depression increases the risk for suicide or suicide attempts. It is **not** true that people who talk about suicide do not attempt it. Suicidal thoughts, remarks, or attempts are **ALWAYS SERIOUS**... if any of these happen to you or a friend, you must tell a responsible adult **IMMEDIATELY** - it's better to be safe than sorry.

You should get evaluated by a professional if you've had 5 or more of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks or if any of these symptoms cause such a big change that you can't keep up your usual routine:

- When You're Depressed...*
- You feel sad or cry a lot and it doesn't go away.
 - You feel guilty for no reason; you feel like you're no good; you've lost your confidence.
 - It's hard to make up your mind. You forget lots of things, and it's hard to concentrate.
 - You don't feel like doing a lot of the things you used to like—music, sports, being with friends—and you want to be alone most of the time.
 - You feel restless and tired most of the time.
 - You think about death, or feel like you're dying, or have thoughts about committing suicide.
 - Life seems meaningless or like nothing good is ever going to happen again. You have a negative attitude a lot of the time, or it seems like you have no feelings.
 - You get irritated often. Little things make you lose your temper; you over-react.
 - Your sleep pattern changes; you start sleeping a lot more or you have trouble falling asleep at night. Or you wake up really early most mornings and can't get back to sleep.
 - Your eating pattern changes; you've lost your appetite or you eat a lot more.

When You're Manic...

- You feel like you're on top of the world.
- You get unreal ideas about great things you can do; things that you really can't do.
- Thoughts go racing through your head, you jump from one subject to another, and you talk a lot.
- You're a non-stop party, constantly running around.
- You do too many wild or risky things: with driving, spending money, with sex, etc.
- You're so "up" that you don't need much sleep.
- You're rebellious or irritable and can't get along at home or school, or with your friends.

Be Able to Tell Fact From Fiction

Myths about depression often prevent people from doing the right thing. Some common myths are:



Myth: It's normal for teenagers to be moody; teens don't suffer from real depression.

FACT: Depression is more than just being moody, and it can affect people at any age, including teenagers.

Myth: Talking about depression only makes it worse.

FACT: Talking through feelings with a good friend is often a helpful first step. Friendship, concern, and support can provide the encouragement to talk to a parent or other trusted adult about getting evaluated for depression.

Myth: Telling an adult that a friend may be depressed is betraying a trust. If someone wants help, he or she will get it.

FACT: Depression, which saps energy and self-esteem, interferes with a person's ability or wish to get help. It is an act of true friendship to share your concerns with an adult who can help.

Depression is a real medical illness and it's treatable.

Why Do People Get Depressed?



Sometimes people get seriously depressed after something like a divorce in the family, major financial problems, someone you love dying, a messed up home life or a break up with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Sure, everybody feels sad or blue now and then. But, if you're sad most of the time, and it's giving you problems with

- Your grades or attendance at school
- Your relationships with your family or friends
- Alcohol, drugs or sex
- Controlling your behavior in other ways



The problem may be DEPRESSION. The good news is that **you can get treatment and feel better soon.**



Talk to Someone

If you are concerned about depression in yourself or a friend, **TALK TO SOMEONE** about it. There are people who can help you get treatment:

- a professional at a mental health center or mental health association
- a trusted family member
- your family doctor
- your clergy
- a school counselor or nurse
- a social worker
- a responsible adult



Or, if you don't know where to turn, call 1-800-273-TALK to talk to someone any time of day or night.

And if you know someone who you think is depressed, **you can help:** Listen and encourage your friend to ask a parent or responsible adult about treatment. If your friend doesn't ask for help soon, talk to an adult you trust and respect—especially if your friend mentions suicide.

Depression can affect people of any age, race, ethnic or economic group.

Let's Talk About Depression



Learn

- *How to recognize depression and manic depression*
- *Different treatments*
- *Why people get depressed*
- *What you need to know about depression and suicide*
- *What you need to know about depression, alcohol and drugs*
- *Facts and fiction*
- *Who to talk to for help*