

Depression

What is depression?

Everyone feels down or blue at times. These feelings may go away over time. But when they last or affect your daily life, you may be dealing with depression.

Causes

Depression may be caused by many things, such as:

- Stressful life events
- Recent major loss
- Drugs or alcohol
- Genetics
- Other medical or psychiatric illnesses
- Medicines

Depression is a medical illness. You cannot “snap out of it” any more than you can think your way out of a medical illness. There are things you can do to deal with your symptoms.

Get help

You need not feel rushed or uneasy when you talk to your health care provider. Your provider is there to help you. Your provider will find possible causes and suggest treatments for your depression.

The earlier you get treatment, the sooner you will begin to feel better. The longer you have depression before you seek treatment, the harder it can be to treat.



To learn more about how to find care, call the number on the back of your ID card. Or call Member Services:

- In Massachusetts
888-257-1985 (TTY: 711)
- In Rhode Island
866-738-4116 (TTY: 711)

Not sure where to start?
Click your plan link below.

[Tufts Health Together](#)

[Tufts Health RITogether](#)

[Tufts Health Direct](#)



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What symptoms should I look for?

You may have psychological and physical symptoms, such as:

- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Problems concentrating, thinking, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling sad, blue, or down in the dumps
- Feeling anxious, worried or irritable
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- A change in appetite or weight
- Loss of energy or feeling tired all of the time
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Headaches
- Aches and pains
- Digestive problems
- Sexual problems
- Outbursts of anger
- Risky behavior

How do I know if I am depressed?

Ask yourself these two questions:

- Over the past two weeks, have I felt down, very sad or hopeless?
- Over the past two weeks, have I had less interest in doing things?

Take action if the answer to either or both of these questions is yes. You should see your health care provider to talk about your symptoms. Your provider can guide you on what steps you can take to feel better.



Treatment

Depression can be treated in several ways:

Therapy (talk therapy): This is a key part of treatment. A therapist can help you cope with your feelings. They also can help you change the patterns that may be adding to your symptoms.

Antidepressant medications: These medicines can help ease your symptoms. Some people have side effects from these medicines. They often don't last long. Make sure you talk with your prescriber if you have any side effects.

Medicine and therapy: For some people, either medicine or psychotherapy may be enough. For others, using both treatments at the same time works best.

Lifestyle changes: Steps that can help improve your mood, include:

- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Relaxation techniques

When you take antidepressants

New medicines may take several weeks to work. You should have at least three follow-up visits with your prescriber in the first three months. Your prescriber can make sure you are on the right medicine. They can also change the dose if needed. You may need to try a few medicines to find one that works for you.

Here are some tips to help you feel better:

- Keep your follow-up visits
- Take your medication as prescribed
- Talk to your prescriber before you stop or change your medication

Don't stop taking your medication when you start to feel better. If you stop taking the medicine too soon, you may start to feel the same symptoms again. Your medicine is key to feeling better.

Two phases of treatment

Depression is usually treated in two steps:

Acute treatment: The aim of this phase is to ease your symptoms until you feel well.

Ongoing treatment: Treating depression for some time after you are well helps keep symptoms from coming back.

Helpful resources

Your primary care provider can be a helpful resource. These websites may also help:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
800-826-3632 | dbsalliance.org

This site offers information about depression and bipolar disorder. It also lists in-person and online support groups, and more. [Find an in-person support group.](#)



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National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
800-950-NAMI (6264) | nami.org

This is a self-help, support and advocacy group of those with severe mental illness and their families and friends. You can text "NAMI" to 62640 to chat online Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

National Institute of Mental Health
866-615-6464 | nimh.nih.gov

NIMH offers information about the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-TALK (8255) TTY: 800-799-4889

This is a 24-hour, toll-free, private suicide prevention hotline. It is for anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call is routed to the nearest crisis center in the national network of more than 150 crisis centers.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
877-726-4727 samhsa.gov

This site provides information about federal, state and local groups that help treat and prevent mental illness.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

- Call or text: 988
- Chat: 988lifeline.org

You can talk with a crisis counselor any time of day or night.

When you're in crisis

If you are having thoughts of death or suicide, call **988** or text "DBSA" to **741-741**. If you need help right away, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.