

Depression Symptoms & Signs

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Depression can be defined as a mental state characterized by a pessimistic sense of inadequacy and a despondent lack of activity. In everyday language "depression" refers to any downturn in mood, which may be relatively transitory and perhaps due to something trivial. This is differentiated from Clinical depression which is marked by symptoms that last two weeks or more and are so severe that they interfere with daily living.



When used to describe a mood, depression refers to what may be normal feelings of sadness, despair and discouragement. More serious depression may be a symptom of a variety of physical and mental disorders, a syndrome of associated symptoms secondary to an underlying disorder, or it may itself be a specific mental disorder.

Know the Signs of Depression and Improve Your Life

Typical signs of depression actually show a change in the way a person has come to think about himself.

1. "I just can't get myself to do any work around the house. My marriage is falling apart."
2. "My hair is thinning. I'm losing my looks. No one will care about me anymore."

These are typical thoughts of people who are depressed and show a change in thinking, feeling and acting.

Here are other signs of depression:

- Continual feelings of sadness, emptiness and helplessness that seem to have no cause
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue
- Sleep and/or eating problems
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and helplessness
- Irritability, excessive crying
- Chronic physical aches and pains that do not go away
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts.

If a person shows several of the above signs of depression for an extended period (2 weeks or more) he should consult a physician. Although the change may come on gradually, the depressed person is different from the way he was before the onset of his illness perhaps even the opposite of his usual self. There are many signs of depression confirming this change: the successful businessman who believes he is on the brink of bankruptcy, the devoted mother who wants to abandon her children, the gourmet who can't stand food, and the playboy who becomes disgusted with sex. Instead of seeking pleasure, the depressed person avoids it. Instead of caring for himself, he neglects himself and his appearance. His instinct to survive may give way to a desire to end his life. His drive to succeed may be replaced by passivity and withdrawal.

The most obvious and typical signs of depression relate to a sad mood: gloomy, lonely, and apathetic. The depressed person may find himself crying even when there seems to be nothing to cry about or may find it impossible to cry when a truly sad event occurs. He may have trouble sleeping or wake early in the morning, unable to return to sleep. On the other hand, feeling constantly tired, he may sleep more than usual. He may lose his appetite and lose weight, or eat more than he does normally and gain weight.

Signs of depression also relate to self-esteem. Typically, the depressed person sees himself in a very negative way. He may believe that he is helpless and alone in the world and often blames himself for trivial faults or shortcomings. He is pessimistic about himself, about the world, and about his future. He loses interest in what is going on around him and doesn't get satisfaction out of activities.

Seven Things You Can Do Immediately To Ease Depression

1. Get out now and walk fifteen minutes. It will get your feet moving and help you feel you are at least able to do something.
2. Go immediately and be with someone who loves you. It will give you the feeling that you are wanted.
3. Religious? Say a prayer. Ask God to help you get through this.
4. Think of a situation, a place where you were very happy. Visualize yourself in that situation once more.
5. Power of suggestion can do wonders. Say to yourself, "I think I can get better. I have to take it step by step. I will work my way out of this."
6. Go out and buy a plant, or some flowers. Having something living in your house makes you feel more alive.
7. If possible, get outside in the sunshine. If it's not possible, turn on some bright lights. Sunshine and bright light are known to make people happier.