

Am I Depressed?

Depression is a medical illness that leads to constant feelings of sadness and lack of interest. It can affect how a person feels, thinks, and behaves. It can interfere with a person's ability to eat, sleep, work, and be a good parent, spouse, or friend. Depression is **not** a sign of weakness, laziness, or lack of willpower. It is a medical illness and should be taken seriously.

Depression affects 1 in 4 people in the United States. It can affect anyone, but it is treatable in even the most severe cases. Recovery takes time and commitment.

symptoms

The following are symptoms of depression. If you or your loved one have these symptoms, you may want to consider treatment.

- Constant feelings of sadness
- Feeling hopeless or negative
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Feeling irritable, anxious, or restless
- Lacking energy
- Eating more or less
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Trouble focusing, remembering details, or making decisions
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping a lot
- Aches, pains, headaches, stomach aches
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

treatment

If you have depression, you don't have to continue suffering without treatment. Treatment works in the majority of cases, often within a few weeks. Making lifestyle changes and keeping up with treatment can help ease your symptoms and prevent them from returning.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep a routine sleeping pattern• Avoid alcohol and drugs• Spend time with friends and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make time for fun activities• Exercise regularly• Eat healthy
THERAPY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet regularly with a therapist or psychiatrist• See your primary care doctor regularly• Reach out to family and close friends	
MEDICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your doctor if you are interested in taking an antidepressant. There are many kinds with different benefits and side effects.	

causes

Depression is caused by an imbalance of the chemicals in the brain. It is more likely to occur in people who have:

- **A family history of depression**
- **Experienced a stressful event** (e.g. trauma, financial strain, relationship conflict)
- **Taken certain medications or drugs**
- **A medical condition** (e.g. pain, anxiety, chronic disease)
- **Hormone changes** (e.g. menstrual cycle, postpartum, or menopause)

Depression can occur without an obvious trigger or any of the risk factors listed above.

impact on family and friends

Seeing someone you care about going through depression can be painful. Your loved ones may not know how to respond or how to help. They may take it personally and become hurt by the things you say or do. They may think that it is their fault. They may become frustrated with you for acting differently. They may be afraid for you. They may become overwhelmed or try to do too much. They may need you and not know how to talk to you. Talk about your depression. The more they understand it, the more they'll be able to support you.

WHEN YOU TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS	
REMIND THEM THAT...	ASK THEM TO...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is not your fault or theirs• Healing may take time• Listening is sometimes the best help• You love them even when you have trouble saying it or showing it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be patient with you• Help you set and keep healthy routines• Help you get treatment• Be encouraging and supportive• Take care of their health too

depression in children

Kids can have depression too. Symptoms in kids are similar to those in adults. In kids, it may be easier to notice behavior changes, such as crying, withdrawing from activities, not eating, complaining of not feeling well, or saying negative things. Kids who are depressed are in serious pain. They may not know what is happening or how to ask for help. Try to be supportive. Pay attention to how they are doing. Talk to their doctor if you are concerned.

Mental Health Access Point | www.mentalhealthaccesspoint.org | 513-558-8888
Call this 24-hour local help line for assessment and referral to therapists in Hamilton County.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline | www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org | 1-800-273-8255
Call this 24-hour national help line if you or someone you know are in crisis or suicidal.