



**Where Can I Go
to Learn More?**

Depression

National Alliance on Mental Illness

800-950-NAMI (800-950-6264)

www.nami.org

National Institute of Mental Health

866-615-6464

www.nimh.nih.gov

Mental Health America

800-969-6642

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Suicide Prevention

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Alcoholics Anonymous

212-870-3400

www.aa.org

Narcotics Anonymous

818-773-9999

www.na.org

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

301-443-3860

www.niaaa.nih.gov

Support for Caregivers

Families for Depression Awareness

781-890-0220

www.familyaware.org

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ABOUT DEPRESSION

**Your Treatment & You:
Working Together to
Help Manage Your Health**





**Because it's important to
know as much as you can.**

This booklet is designed to help you understand depression and the things you can do every day to help manage it.

Taking your medicine as directed is one of the most important things you can do. If you're like most people, this may be easier said than done.



As always, talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]

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Depression—What Is It?

“*I just don't feel like myself anymore.*”

Most people feel moody or blue from time to time. These feelings most often go away within a few days. If these feelings continue or seem severe, talk with your healthcare provider.



What is depression?

Depression is a real medical condition and can be serious. You may not feel like yourself. You have a deep feeling of sadness and lose interest in things you used to enjoy. You may have problems sleeping, working, or doing other daily activities.

Talk with your provider if any of these describe you.
Check all that apply:

- ☐ Persistently sad or empty feeling
- ☐ Do not care about things you used to enjoy
- ☐ Change in appetite or weight (loss or gain)
- ☐ Sleep too much or too little, wake up early in the morning, or oversleep
- ☐ Have lost your interest in sex
- ☐ Feel guilty, not worth much, or helpless
- ☐ Restlessness or irritability
- ☐ Feel fatigued or do not have usual energy
- ☐ Cannot think or make up your mind or remember things
- ☐ Body aches and pains or stomach problems that don't go away
- ☐ Have thought about dying or killing yourself*

***If you are having thoughts of dying or killing yourself, you should call 911 or your provider immediately.**



Talking With Healthcare Team

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 My doctor/nurse and I work together to make decisions.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

Behavior



Taking Medicines

Have You...

In the last week In the last month In the last 3 months More than 3 months ago Never

8 Taken a medicine more or less often than prescribed?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

9 Skipped or stopped taking a medicine because you didn't think it was working?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

10 Skipped or stopped taking a medicine because it made you feel bad?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

11 Skipped, stopped, not refilled, or taken less medicine because of the cost?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

12 Not had medicine with you when it was time to take it?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

If you checked any answers in the darker blue boxes, talk with your healthcare provider.



Taking Medicine— What Gets In The Way?

Think about all of the medicines you take. Mark one answer for each item below.



Inconvenience/Forgetfulness

Lifestyles

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- I just forget to take my medicines some of the time.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- I run out of my medicine because I don't get refills on time.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- Taking medicines more than once a day is inconvenient.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Treatment Beliefs

Attitudes and Beliefs

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- I feel confident that each one of my medicines will help me.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- I know if I am reaching my health goals.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Help From Others

- I have someone I can call with questions about my medicines.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

“How did I get depression?”

Anyone can get depression. Depression tends to run in families. It also happens in women more than men. Depression can occur along with certain illnesses or medicines.



What causes depression?

Many things can contribute to depression. Out-of-balance brain chemicals may contribute to depression.

“This sounds scary. What can I do?”

Go see a provider if the sadness, loss of interest, or other symptoms of depression last for more than two weeks.* Tell the provider how you feel. This helps the provider choose the plan for you.

Get the help you need:

- Depression does not just go away. It is a real health problem.
- You cannot just “snap out” of depression.
- Depression can be treated. Treatment may include medicine, counseling, or both.



Talk with your healthcare provider if you think you might have symptoms of depression.



My Depression Goals— What Are They?

You are the most important person in managing your depression. Talk with your provider to help you choose one or more goals you are ready to work on now. Place a check next to your goals below.

Goal 1



Provider Visits

- ☐ I will keep my provider visits, even when I feel fine.
- ☐ I will ask my provider questions when I do not understand something.
- ☐ I will _____

Goal 2



Counseling

- ☐ I will ask my provider if I should talk to a counselor or therapist.
- ☐ I will go to my regular counseling visits.
- ☐ I will _____

Goal 3



Medicines

- ☐ I will take my depression medicine(s) as directed by my provider.
- ☐ I will call my provider if I have problems.
- ☐ I will _____

If you abuse alcohol or drugs:

- Educate yourself. Make an informed choice about alcohol and drugs of abuse.
- Drugs of abuse can be street drugs or prescription drugs that are used improperly.
- Drugs of abuse and alcohol may interfere with medicines for depression. Talk with your provider about this.

Things to remember:

- Depression is a real medical condition and can be serious. It is not a state of mind you can wish away.
- Depression is treatable. You don't have to deal with these feelings by yourself.
- There are people who care and want to help, like your provider, counselor, family, or friends. Call them if you need help.

| | Name | Phone Number |
|----------------------|------|--------------|
| Provider | | |
| Counselor | | |
| Family member/Friend | | |
| Family member/Friend | | |



Depression Support— Where Can I Go for Help?

“*I feel all alone in treating my depression.*”

- If your friends and family offer to help, let them. If you need more help, ask for it. Many people want to help but don't know how.
- Consider asking your provider about a depression support group. To find a group in your area, visit www.dbsalliance.org or call 800-826-3632.

If you have trouble paying for your medicine:

- If you have Medicare or think you may be eligible for Medicare, call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227), or visit www.medicare.gov.
- For information on Medicaid, contact your state Medicaid agency.

If you are having thoughts of dying or killing yourself:

- **Call 911 or your provider immediately to get help.**
- Don't stay alone. Stay with someone until help arrives.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255).

To learn more about what may be getting in the way of taking your medicines, go to www.HealthCoach4Me.com

Goal 4



Lifestyle

- ☐ I will keep a regular schedule. This includes eating, exercising, and sleeping.
- ☐ I will look for ways to relax, such as exercising or listening to music.
- ☐ I will avoid street drugs and alcohol.
- ☐ I will _____

Goal 5



Keeping a Journal

- ☐ I will keep track of my thoughts and feelings every day.
- ☐ I will _____

Goal 6



Asking for Help

- ☐ **I will call 911 or my provider immediately if I have thoughts of dying or killing myself.**
- ☐ I will ask for help when I need it.
- ☐ If I need to talk to someone, I will call:
 - A friend or family member
 - The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
 - My local crisis hot line (check the phone book for the number)
- ☐ I will talk to my provider if street drugs or alcohol are a problem for me.
- ☐ I will _____



Depression Medicines— What Should I Know?

Medicine is one way to treat depression. It's thought to work on brain chemicals. These brain chemicals help to regulate moods.

Medicines for Depression

There are many types of depression medicines. Each one works in a different way to help manage the symptoms of depression. Talk with your provider about the different kinds of medicine to treat depression. You and your provider will choose the medicine that is right for you.

“*It's taking awhile for my medicine to start working.*”

- Medicine for depression (even when taken as directed by your provider) may not start working immediately.
- Give your medicine time to work. Ask your provider when you may start to feel better.
- Tell your provider if you do not feel better after that time.

Not every medicine is right for everyone. It is important to talk to your healthcare provider at each visit about your depression symptoms and how you are doing on your medicine.

Questions to Ask My Provider:

- What is the name of the medicine and how can it help me?

- How and when do I take the medicine?

- What do I do if I miss a dose?

- What are the possible side effects? What should I do if they occur?

- Will it cause problems with the medicines I already take (including over-the-counter medicines) for other health problems?

- When should the medicine start to work?

- How long do I take the medicine?

- When and how do I refill my prescription?



My Healthcare Provider Visits— How Can I Get Ready?

You and your provider and counselor are a team. Talk openly and honestly with them about your feelings.

“*I don't feel right asking my doctor some questions.*”

- All questions are important. Do not be afraid to speak up if you do not understand something.
- Ask your provider to help you answer the questions on the next page.
- Tell your provider or counselor how you feel. Share any changes in your life.
- Your provider can help you with your treatment plan. Call your provider if you have any problems or if you have questions about your treatment plan.
- Consider asking a family member to join you on provider visits. They can take notes.

If you have trouble understanding or remembering what your provider says:

- Ask your provider to repeat anything you didn't understand.
- Ask for written information. Is it available in large print or another language?

Planning can help you get the most out of your visits with a healthcare provider or counselor. Write down any questions you want to ask so you don't forget them once you are in the office.

“*I sometimes want to stop taking my medicine because of side effects.*”

- Side effects may occur with any medicine. Tell your provider about any side effects you may have or have had in the past. Ask what to do if side effects happen.
- Never stop taking your medicine without first talking to your provider.



Counseling

Your provider may suggest that you talk with a counselor or therapist. Talking may help you learn why you feel and act certain ways. You and your counselor may work on ways to help you cope with your feelings.

Here are some suggested questions to ask your counselor:

- What will I need to do during therapy?
- How often will we meet?
- How long will counseling continue?
- If I have an emergency, how do I get help?
- Other: _____

Fill out a medicine chart like the one below and talk with your provider. This may help you take the right dose at the right time. Include all medicines that you take for all reasons.

[illegible]


Depression does not just go away. It is a real health problem. You cannot just “snap out” of depression.



Pay attention to any changes in your mood or behavior. Report any sudden or severe changes in your mood to your healthcare provider.

Keeping a journal can be a good way to learn more about your feelings. Use the space below to get started on your journal. Find a comfortable place to write. Take a deep breath and begin. Don't just write about daily events. Think about how you feel each day. What makes you sad? Do you do anything that makes you feel better?

Monday - I felt sad in the morning but felt better after lunch with my friends.

- Mark medicine refill dates on your calendar.
 - Use reminder notes to remember to take your medicine.
 - Talk to your provider if you have questions about your medicine or how to take it. Put a check mark beside the medicines that you have questions about.
- 
- A green circular graphic containing a white illustration of a medicine bottle with a label that has the letter 'R' on it. A magnifying glass is positioned over the bottle, with its handle extending to the right. The entire graphic is surrounded by a dotted green border.

[illegible]



Sticking With My Medicine— What Will Work?

Taking your depression medicine as directed by your provider is one of the most important things you can do to help manage your depression symptoms.



Not taking your depression medicine as directed by your provider means:

- Your medicine may not work the way it should.
- Depression symptoms may return.
- You may have side effects if you suddenly stop your medicine.

“I sometimes want to stop taking my medicine when I feel better.”

- Continue to take medicine as directed, even if you are feeling better. Your depression symptoms may return if you stop taking your medicine.
- Never stop taking your medicine without first talking to your provider.

“I’m so busy. It’s hard for me to keep track of my medicine.”

Taking one or more medicines at different times each day can be hard. The key is to create a routine that fits your life.

- Try taking your depression medicine around the same time as other daily habits, such as in the morning when brushing your teeth or in the evening around dinnertime.

If you often forget to take your medicine:

- Ask your pharmacist if it is okay to use a pillbox marked with the days of the week to store your medicine. If it is okay, you can take it with you when you are away from home.
- Wear a watch. Set an alarm. Leave yourself a note on the bathroom mirror.
- Keep your medicine in a place where you will see it every day.



If you forget to refill your medicine on time:

- Write “refill medicine” on your calendar about a week before your medicine will run out.
- Make sure you have enough refills to last until your next provider visit.
- Ask your pharmacy to send you reminders to refill your prescription.



Some people taking depression medicines may think about suicide more. This occurs most often in people under 25 years of age. If you have these thoughts, call 911 or your healthcare provider immediately.