

Depression

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder. Men, women, and teens get depression, but experience it differently. It is a real, treatable brain illness or health problem.

Men: May be more likely to feel very tired and irritable, and lose interest in their work, family or hobbies. They may be more likely to have difficulty sleeping than women with depression. Although women with depression are more likely to attempt suicide, men are more likely to die by suicide.

- Many men do not recognize, acknowledge or seek help for their depression. They may be reluctant to talk about how they are feeling.

Women: Can feel very tired, helpless and hopeless. Experience being sad most of the time and taking no pleasure in family, friends or hobbies. Symptoms may interfere with a woman's ability to work, sleep, study, eat and enjoy life.

- Women with symptoms of depression that began during pregnancy or in the month after giving birth are known to have postpartum depression. Women who have had episodes of depression before they became pregnant are at increased risk of postpartum depression.

Teens: Grades may drop; teens may experience more intense feelings of sadness, hopelessness and anger or frustration that lasts for weeks, months or longer. These feelings make it hard to participate in usual activities. They may have difficulty focusing and feeling like they have little or no motivation or energy. Don't feel like seeing their best friends and make it hard to enjoy life or get through the day.

Signs and Symptoms of depression: Not everyone experiences every symptom.

- Persistent sad, "empty" mood; feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious, or angry.
- Loss of interest in work, family, or once-pleasurable activities.
- Feeling very tired, decreased energy or fatigue.
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much, early-morning awakening.
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details.
- Appetite and/or weight changes.
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps or a digestive problem without a clear physical cause and/or that does not ease with treatment.

Causes: Different kinds of factors play a role in the risk of depression. It tends to run in families. Some genes increase the risk of depression. Others increase resilience--the ability to recover from hardship. Some stresses or losses may trigger depression in one person and not another. Teen hormones can fluctuate causing moodiness or crying about the smallest thing. It can be caused by big transitions in life.

Treatment: Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier treatment begins the more effective it is. The first step to getting the right treatment is to visit a doctor or mental health professional. The doctor may be able to rule out other conditions that may have the same symptoms as depression.

- Talk therapy with a licensed social worker, psychiatrist, psychologist or counselor can help understand and manage feelings and emotions.
- Medicines: The doctor may prescribe antidepressants depending on symptoms. There are a few antidepressants that have been widely studied and proven to help teens.

Source: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.