



Depression Information

What is depression?

Depression is a common but serious illness. Everyone feels sad from time to time, but it usually passes in a few days. When these feelings last more than a few weeks, they may indicate depression. More than 19 million Americans suffer from depression, including 12 million women, who experience depression at twice the rate of men. Many people believe depression will go away on its own. Left untreated, depression can interfere with daily functioning, such as eating and sleeping, and can disrupt daily routines of work and school.

What causes depression?

There is no one cause of depression. Many things can affect a person's susceptibility including genetics, environment, and biochemical and psychological factors. Although depression can occur in people without a family history of depression, it tends to run in families. Stressful environments, traumatic events, and negative relationships can also lead to depression. A chemical imbalance in the brain can also be a cause.

Symptoms of depression:

- **Persistent sad or empty mood**
- **Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed**
- **Feelings of hopelessness**
- **Restlessness and irritability**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Change in sleep habits (insomnia or excessive sleeping)**
- **Loss of energy**
- **Change in eating habits (overeating or loss of appetite)**
- **Ongoing aches and pains that do not go away with treatment**
- **Thoughts of suicide or death, or suicide attempts**

If you experience five or more of these symptoms for two weeks or longer, you could be experiencing clinical depression. See a doctor or qualified mental professional for help, right away.

Where can I get help?

The first thing you can do is get an appropriate diagnosis and treatment. You can start by visiting your family doctor. A doctor can make sure your symptoms are not caused by another medical condition. After conducting a physical examination, lab tests and an interview, a doctor can rule out this possibility. Once this possibility is eliminated, a doctor may refer you to a mental health professional. Once diagnosed, treatment can begin. There are many options available for treatment.

Most insurance plans cover treatment for depression. Check with your own insurance company to find out what is covered. If you do not have insurance, or treatment is not covered with your plan, there are other places you can go for help. See the list of resources on the reverse side for more information.

Treatment

- **Medications** help balance chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters. Most antidepressants take three to four weeks before being fully effective. Patients need to continue taking antidepressants, even when feeling better, in order to prevent a relapse of depression. Although antidepressants are effective in regulating a person's mood, there is the possibility of experiencing side effects including headache, dry mouth, nausea, constipation and insomnia. A patient may need to try multiple antidepressants to find one that works for them.
- **Psychotherapy**, or "talk therapy," includes individual and group psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. There are two main types of psychotherapy used in treating depression: cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT). CBT teaches people to change negative styles of thinking and behavior that may contribute to their depression. IPT helps people understand and work through troubled personal relationships that may cause their depression or make it worse.

Over 80 percent of people with depression can be treated successfully with medications, psychotherapy, or both. In addition to medications and psychotherapy, there are other things you can do to help yourself recover from depression. Maintaining a healthy diet, regular exercise and healthy sleep habits can improve your mood. Becoming involved in social activities and group support groups are also important to staying well.

Resources in the Greater Kansas City Area

Mental Health Association of the Heartland

739 Minnesota Ave.

Kansas City, KS 66101

913-281-2221

www.mhah.org

Compassionate Ear Warmline 913-281-2251 or 1-800-WARMEAR (927-6327)

To find a Community Mental Health Center in your area, visit: www.mentalhealthkc.org

You can find more information and resources on depression by visiting:

www.mentalhealthamerica.net or www.nimh.nih.gov

Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Missouri Crisis Line: 1-888-279-8188

Kansas Crisis Lines:

Johnson and Leavenworth Counties 913-831-2550

Wyandotte County 913-328-4600

Sources:

Mental Health America

1-800-969-6642

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Institute of Mental Health

1-866-615-NIMH (6464)

www.nimh.nih.gov

