



DEPRESSION

Sponsored by the South Carolina Psychiatric Association.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is an illness that negatively affects the way someone may think or feel. Tragic events may make you feel *depressed*, but a sad mood is not the same as depression. Depression can last for weeks, months or years. However, with appropriate treatment, depression can be cured.

DEPRESSION CAN AFFECT ANYONE

Anyone can suffer from depression. However, some segments of the population are more at risk than others.

Women are twice as likely to become depressed due to hormonal changes such as menstruation, menopause and pregnancy.

Men are more prone to become angry and turn to alcohol or drug abuse. Due to depression, men are four times as likely to commit suicide. They are also less likely to seek help.

The elderly are likely to suffer from depression as a result of traumatic life events, such as adjusting to living by themselves or losing loved ones.

WHY SCREEN FOR DEPRESSION?

- Depression is a serious mental illness that should not be taken lightly.
- Millions of adults experience depression each year.
- Depression can lead to suicide.
- Depression can complicate other medical conditions.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS

Depressed Mood: Sad, hopeless or empty. Having suicidal thoughts.

Sleep Changes: Sleeping too much or too little.

Weight Changes: Noticeable weight-loss or weight-gain.

Loss of Energy: Constantly tired and not being able to complete your day-to-day tasks.

Self-Loathing: Criticizing yourself and feeling worthless.

Irritability: Feeling angry, annoyed or frustrated.

Physical Symptoms: Headaches, backaches, abdominal pain or joint aches.

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

- Chemical imbalances in the brain
- Low self-esteem
- Hormonal changes
- Life-altering illnesses
- Tragic events
- Medications
- Genetics
- Certain medical illnesses

Depending on the person, there may be one or many reasons for their depressed state. Sometimes there is no reason for someone's depression.

TREATMENTS FOR DEPRESSION

Depression is one of the most treatable mental disorders. The majority of patients respond well to treatment and almost all patients feel symptom relief. However, a primary care physician or psychiatrist should do a thorough exam before treatment is started.

Common treatment options for depression include anti-depressants and psychotherapy.

Anti-Depressants: Medications that are prescribed to balance chemicals in the brain. These drugs are not harmful and do not become addictive.

Psychotherapy: Counselors and patients come together to talk alone or in groups. Issues affecting the depression of the patient are discussed and attempted to be resolved. Negative thought patterns that lead to depressed moods are recognized and stopped.

These treatments can be used alone or together depending on the level of depression.

NEED HELP?

Caring people are ready to assist you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All you have to do is call.

SUICIDE HOTLINE - 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

CRISIS/ DEPRESSION HOTLINE - 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

TEEN HOTLINE - 1-800-852-TEEN (1-800-852-8336)

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 1-800-969-NMHA (1-800-969-6642)



Did you Know?

62,000 people in South Carolina suffer from depression.

Source: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2005)

The purpose of the SCMA Health Watch program is to disseminate health information to the citizens of South Carolina and allow them to become more empowered in taking charge of their own health. To subscribe to this free publication please email news@scmanet.org or call 1.800.327.1021. Please reproduce and distribute this information. When distributing this information in another format, please credit the South Carolina Medical Association.