

# #5 Depression



Depression is a disorder that affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts. When people are depressed their brain works differently than when they don't have depression. Many of us feel sad for short periods of time. But true **clinical depression** is a mood disorder in which people feel, think, and act differently than when they are well. Even though people don't always talk about it, depression is very common and can affect anyone.

**Clinical Depression is Prolonged, Intense and Disrupts Normal Daily Activity**

**Depression and Grief.** Clinical depression is not the same thing as grieving the loss of a loved one through death, separation or divorce. Feelings of sadness, low energy, emptiness, lack of interest in things are normal during grief. Depression is different in that it can occur without a significant loss. In addition, depression may last longer and include feelings such as self-criticism, despair, and hopelessness.

**What are the common symptoms of depression?** (symptoms are intense and last for more than 2 weeks)

- Sadness
- Loss of enjoyment in things you use to find fun
- Loss of energy
- Hopeless and Helplessness, Anger and Irritation
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Trouble sleeping (can't sleep or sleeping too much)
- Stomach ache and digestive problems
- Not caring about appearance
- Not caring about things like you use to
- Thinking about death or suicide
- Attempting suicide



**Children and Teens can get depressed too.** They sometimes have other symptoms than the ones listed above. Watch for changes in behaviour at home, at school or in sleeping or eating patterns.

**There is a strong connection between chronic illness (for example diabetes, cancer, alcoholism) and depression.** If you suffer a chronic health condition and have some symptoms of depression, seek help for managing symptoms of depression.

**Good News! Depression is treatable.**



## **What does someone with depression act like?**

Depression can make people feel impatient, angry and more irritable than normal. They find it difficult to do things or to feel motivated. A person with depression may get tired more easily or spend a lot of time in bed. They worry a lot more than normal and sometimes have a negative attitude about life. It can also cause someone to be sad and cry a lot, to not care about themselves or about life.

## **What causes Depression? There are many possible**

**causes for depression:** \*Biochemistry \*Genetics \*Personality \*Difficult Life Situations \* Other Illnesses \* Disappointments \* Drugs such as sedatives or blood pressure medications\* Alcohol and Drug Abuse \*Childhood Abuse or Neglect \* Social Isolation \* Nutritional Deficiencies \* Sleep Problems

**There are different types of Depression.** Some of these include:

1. Major Depression
2. Dysthymia
3. Bipolar Disorder
4. Postpartum Depression
5. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
6. A depression following a trauma or major loss may be called a "Reactive" Depression.

## **Effective Treatment and Management of Depression**

Without treatment symptoms of depression can become very serious and even life-threatening if a person has thoughts of suicide. It is very important to seek help if you have symptoms of depression.

**Treatment can include medication and/or counseling.** Clinical Depression is assessed by a doctor, a psychologist or a psychiatrist. A medical history and examination are usually the first step is assessing depression. Talking to someone you trust, learning new coping skills, exercising, and nutrition all help to manage the symptoms of depression.

## **Seek help immediately if you have the following symptoms:**

- You hear voices that are not there
- You have frequent crying spells without knowing what caused it
- You have symptoms of depression that last more than 2 weeks
- You think that a medication you are taking is making you feel depressed (don't stop the medication, but see your doctor).
- You are using drugs or alcohol and having depression symptoms

**How can you get help?** If you or someone you know may be suffering from symptoms of depression or if you are having thoughts of suicide. **Having Suicidal Thoughts? Call London Crisis Service 519-433-2023**

- ✓ Talk to your healer, counselor, or doctor about your symptoms
- ✓ Encourage your family member to talk to a counselor or doctor
- ✓ If you have a chronic health condition and have noticed some symptoms of depression, discuss these with your family physician.

