

Depression affects people in different ways

Women: Women with depression typically have symptoms of sadness, worthlessness, and guilt. Biological, lifecycle, hormonal, and psychosocial factors that are unique to women may be linked to their higher depression rate.

Men: Men are more likely to be very tired, irritable, lose interest in once pleasurable activities, have difficulty sleeping and may turn to alcohol or drugs when they are depressed. They also may become frustrated, discouraged, angry, and sometimes abusive.

Children: Before puberty, girls and boys are equally likely to develop depression. A child with depression may pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent, or worry that a parent may die. Because normal behaviors vary from one childhood stage to another, it can be difficult to tell whether a child is just going through a temporary “phase” or is suffering from depression.

Teens: The teen years can be tough. Teens are forming an identity apart from their parents, grappling with gender issues and emerging sexuality, and making independent decisions for the first time in their lives. Older children and teens with depression may sulk, get into trouble at school, be negative and irritable, and feel misunderstood.

For more information on Depression and other mental illnesses, please contact any of the following:

NAMI Flagstaff at www.namiflagstaff.org

NAMI Arizona at www.namiarizona.org

NAMI National at www.nami.org

In an emergency, call:

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
at **800-273-8255** or call **911**



DEPRESSION

Sadness is something we all experience. It is a normal reaction to difficult times in life and usually passes with a little time. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning. It can cause pain for both the person with depression and those who care about him or her.

Doctors call this condition “depressive disorder,” or “clinical depression.” It is a real illness. It is not a sign of a person’s weakness or a character flaw. You can’t “snap out of” clinical depression. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better.

Factors that play a role in depression

- Genetics, brain biology and chemistry
- Life events such as trauma, loss of a loved one, or a stressful situation
- Often co-occurs with other serious illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and Parkinson Disease.
- Sometimes medications taken for other illnesses may cause side effects that contribute to depression.
- Often begins in the teens or early 20s
- May occur in women after giving birth due to changes in hormone levels.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Sadness is only a small part of depression. Depression has many other symptoms, including physical ones. If you have been experiencing any of the following signs and symptoms for at least 2 weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent physical symptoms

Quick Tips for talking to your depressed child or teen

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Talk to your child, not necessarily about depression, and listen carefully.
- Never discount the feelings your child expresses, but point out realities and offer hope.
- Never ignore comments about suicide.
- Remind your child that with time and treatment, the depression will lift.

TYPES OF DEPRESSION

- **Major depression:** Severe symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy life. An episode can occur only once in a person’s lifetime, but more often, a person has several episodes.
- **Persistent depressive disorder:** A depressed mood that lasts for at least 2 years. A person diagnosed with persistent depressive disorder may have episodes of major depression along with periods of less severe symptoms, but symptoms must last for 2 years.
- **Psychotic depression:** Occurs when a person has severe depression plus some form of psychosis, such as having disturbing false beliefs or a break with reality (delusions), or hearing or seeing upsetting things that others cannot hear or see (hallucinations).
- **Postpartum depression:** A condition which is much more serious than the “baby blues” that many women experience after giving birth. It is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of women experience postpartum depression after giving birth.
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD):** which is characterized by the onset of depression during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression generally lifts during spring and summer.

Depression is treatable.

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier treatment begins, the more effective it is. Most adults see an improvement in their symptoms when treated with antidepressant drugs, talk therapy (psychotherapy), or a combination of both.