

More life style changes

Sleep:

Create a regular sleep schedule and stick to it. Sleep irregularities are a symptom of depression. Studies have shown that getting enough sleep can help cure depression. Remember, exercising daily at least 3-4 hours before bedtime and preferably in the morning help with sleep as well. Try taking a warm bath before laying down as well.

Laugh:

Your body produces chemicals that make you happier even when you simply make laughing expressions. Listen to jokes you enjoy, or watch television programs that make you laugh.



Support Groups:

It may be easier to deal with the changes that depression brings by joining a support group. Here, you may talk with other people about how the illness has affected you and what you are doing to treat your depression. It is a place to establish relationships with people who are going through the same illness. There are several support groups available throughout the country such as Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA). Other resources are printed on the back of this pamphlet.

Resources

Depression After Delivery, Inc. (Postpartum Depression)

www.depressionafterdelivery.com

1-800-944-4773

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

www.nami.org

1-800-950-NAMI

(1-800-950-6264)

National Foundation for Depressive Illness, Inc.

1-800-239-1265

www.depression.org

National Hopeline Network

1-800-SUICIDE

(1-800-784-2433)

National Mental Health Association

www.nmha.org

1-800-969-6642

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255)

Depression Wellness Network

9500 Roosevelt Way Northeast

Seattle, WA 98115

(206) 528-9975

Al-Shifa Clinic

Email: alshifa@u.washington.edu

Website: <http://students.washington.edu/alshifa>

Depression

Information you should know to help yourself or a loved one



What is Depression?

Depression is an illness that negatively affects a person's lifestyle and relationships. A depressive disorder is more than just a condition that can be wished away; without treatment, depression can last from weeks to years. It is extremely important to seek help immediately if you think you have depression



Causes

Some of the causes of depression are genetic. Other factors that may cause depression include physical changes in the body, such as a medical illness (stroke, heart attack, cancer), experiencing a difficult relationship or loss of a loved one, financial problems, and home or work-related stress. Usually depression is caused by a combination of these genetic and stress factors. But the truth is, we don't know exactly why some people suffer from depression while others don't.

Symptoms

- Constant sadness, tension, irritability, "empty" or "numb" mood that lasts many weeks
- Feelings of helplessness, guilt, and pessimism that last for weeks
- Fatigue, decreased energy
- Changes in appetite- weight loss or weight gain
- Loss of interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyed
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempt

Treatment

Medication

Depression is very treatable and most patients who seek treatment show improvement. Talk to your health care provider about what you're going through. The most common treatments for depression are antidepressant medications and cognitive therapy. Research has shown antidepressants to be more effective when paired with cognitive behavioral therapy, or counseling. Discuss therapy options with your health care provider. If you are prescribed antidepressants, it is important to give the medication time. It may take one month to notice a change in your mood, and longer to feel the full benefits of the medication. If your antidepressant causes you to lose your libido, feel too fatigued or another side effect, remember there are many medications available. Most people have to try a few medications before finding one that's right for them.

Life Style Changes

Depression may be eased even by simple changes to your daily lifestyle. During depression, motivation is difficult to achieve. However, it is widely acknowledged that if you discipline yourself to a task, you will feel better by accomplishing it. The following list of activities has been shown to improve the health of the mind and body.

Exercise:

Any activity that involves strengthening and endurance is a natural antidepressant. Exercise increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain, releasing endorphins (the body's natural pain-killing chemicals).



Diet:

Good nutrition is vital for the optimal function of your body and brain. Eat a well-balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and lean meats. Try eating as much organic food as possible, to avoid ingesting chemicals and preservatives that may affect more sensitive individuals.