



# Understanding your depression

If you suffer from depression, you're not alone. Almost 10 percent of Americans have depression at some time.<sup>1</sup> One way to deal with depression — and perhaps the best place to start — is to understand it.

## What causes depression?

There are different types of depression, ranging from mild and temporary to persistent or "major depression."<sup>2</sup> Reasons for depression can be family history, medical issues, traumatic life experiences and more.

When you're depressed, you're filled with negative thoughts and feelings. It can be both painful and debilitating. It can make you feel hopeless.

## What are signs of depression?

When you're depressed you may feel:

- Sad
- Angry
- Disinterested in things you usually like
- Tired
- Unable to sleep or sleeping too much
- Very hungry or not hungry at all
- Worried, ashamed
- Indecisive, unfocused
- Wanting to stay away from everyone and everything

People who are depressed may also consider suicide. If you or someone you know talks about suicide, take it seriously. Get help right away by calling 911 for emergency help or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 988.

## Do you know what brings on your depression?

What or when are the times when you're most likely to feel sad? You may notice your feelings are worse at a certain time of day, month of the year or in certain settings.

You may be more at risk when you're very hungry or tired. Maybe a specific person or place upsets you. Thinking about these questions may help you see things that can cause depression.

- Get a knot in your stomach, start sweating or have rapid heartbeats?
- Get headaches, body aches or feel tired?
- Lose your appetite and your interest in doing things you usually enjoy?
- Want to skip work or school and stay in bed?
- Keep away from friends and family?
- Think about suicide? If you do, get help right away. Call a trusted friend, 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at &nbsp;988.

When you avoid people or activities, your depression may get worse. It can cause problems in your wellbeing, relationships and work or home life.

## Help can be the key

Depression doesn't go away overnight. It takes work to get better.

It's often helpful to see a professional therapist to deal with your feelings and learn coping skills. A therapist or counselor is trained to listen, not judge you. They can hear and understand your feelings and help lead you to happier times.

It's important to learn and practice coping skills that can help you break the cycle of depression.



1 [allaboutdepression.com](http://allaboutdepression.com) . All about depression.  
Accessed January 2022.

2 Hall-Flavin, Daniel M.D. Clinical depression: What does that mean? Mayo Clinic. Accessed January 2022.

This material provides a general overview of the topic. Health information is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a therapist, physician or other health care professional. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.