



# Depression

## What is Depression?

Everyone feels sad from time to time. However these feelings are short-lived and last only a few days. Depression is where these feelings are severe, or long lasting. Depression is a serious illness that leaves you feeling "down" most of the time and finding it hard to "cope" from day to day. Depression is increasingly common. Significant life events can trigger periods of depression such as exam/work stress, family turmoil, or concerns around identity or sexual orientation are all types of things that may "trigger" depression. Hormonal changes around adolescence may also contribute. Adolescents can frequently suffer (5-10%) from depressive symptoms.

## Symptoms

May include -

- Having feelings of overwhelming sadness, which may be compounded by feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless. They may also feel tense, anxious, irrationally worried and irritable.
- Losing interest and pleasure in things they would normally enjoy. They may have difficulty concentrating, making decisions or remembering things.
- Having difficulty sleeping, waking early or not being able to fall asleep. They may have no motivation. They may feel very tired; have no energy to get out of bed. They may have a change in appetite and lose/gain weight.
- Paying less attention to themselves, like washing less or wearing the same clothes daily.
- Sometimes depression gets so severe that a person may hear or see things that may not be there (Hallucinate and/or become delusional).
- Have recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, self harm, or make suicide attempts.

## Problem?

If for more than **TWO WEEKS** you have felt/experienced a majority of the symptoms listed you may have depression. If at any stage you have recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, self harm, or feel like making suicide attempts please seek help (GP), call 112 / 999 or visit your nearest Emergency Department.

## Mood Disorders

Mood disorder is a term that is applied to a number of conditions in which the most prominent symptom is either an elevation or depression of mood.

St Patrick's  
University Hospital  
*Support &  
Information Line*  
**01- 249 33 33**

## Related Conditions

- Bipolar Affective Disorder
  - Postnatal Depression
  - Seasonal Affective Disorder
  - Other Mental Health Problems
- People with other mental health difficulties may also develop depression :-
- Anxiety Disorders
  - Personality Disorders
  - Eating Disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa.



## Treatment

If you are unsure that you need treatment, seeing your GP (Family Doctor) is a good way to start.

- Self Help / Self Care - Looking after yourself will help you to recover.
- Talking - To someone you trust, talking is very helpful
- GP review / Medical Tests to rule out medical cause
- Counselling and Talking Therapies - Stress Management specific or problem solving may be particularly beneficial.
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - It deals with and aims to change your current thought processes and/or behaviour.
- Family Therapy - Acknowledge triggers, stop unhelpful interactions, help the family to communicate better and improve relationships.
- Anti-depressant medication
- Other medication as discussed with your GP or Psychiatrist.
- These treatments may be as an Outpatient, Day Patient or as an Inpatient

## More Support & Information

- Aware - phone 1890 30 33 02
- Samaritans - phone 1850 60 90 90
- Teenline - phone 1800 833 634
- Your Local GP / Mental Health Nurse
- In Emergencies Call 112 / 999 or go to your local Emergency Department

## Who gets depression?

Anyone can get depressed! Major Depressive Disorder is not so common in children with an incident of approximately 2%. It becomes more common as children increase in age. Some 5-10% of adolescents will have a major depressive episode during their adolescent years. It affects girls and boys equally during childhood, but during adolescence girls are three times more likely to have a major depressive episode.

## Myths & Important Points to Stop you Getting Depressed and to Help you Get Better

Depression is common but many people don't admit to the symptoms. Some people feel there is a stigma attached, or that people will think that they are weak. Depression is one of the most common illnesses that GP's deal with. People with depression may be told by others to "pull your socks up" or "snap out of it". The truth is that they cannot, and comments like those are very unhelpful. Understanding that your symptoms are due to depression and that it is a common illness, may help you to accept that you are ill and need help. Some people ask "am I going mad?", it may be a relief to know that you are not going mad, and the symptoms that you have are common and have been shared by many other young people. You may "bottle up" your feelings and symptoms from family and friends. However, if you are open about your feelings with close family and friends, it may help them to understand.

- Talk about your feelings and emotions
- Spend time and stay connected with people you like and trust
- If you think you are depressed, take action early
- Eat a healthy and varied diet
- Stay physically active
- Take time to do something you enjoy
- Get enough sleep
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Don't stress (or not too much)
- Remember some days will be better than others



**Look** - For the signs and symptoms



**Listen** - To your friends experiences



**Talk** - About what's going on



**Seek Help**

## Websites

Headstrong - [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie)  
SpunOut - [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)  
Aware - [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)  
Childline - [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

**Sources**

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk), [www.youthbeyondblue.org.au](http://www.youthbeyondblue.org.au), [www.rcpsych.org.uk](http://www.rcpsych.org.uk)