Mental Health

Depressive Disorder

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in the United States. There are several different types of depressive disorders, though all share many of the same symptoms. Some are more severe and long lasting. Some people may have only one depressive episode in their lives, while others may have recurring or constant depression unless they are successfully treated.

Major Depression

Other symptoms of depression may vary somewhat—from person to person, or within one person over time. The following symptoms are typical of most types of depression. A diagnosis of major depression usually means having more than one symptom, most of the time, for at least two weeks.

Symptoms include:

- Thoughts or attempts of suicide
- Feeling sad most of the time
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Feeling like life is overwhelming and beyond control
- Feeling helpless to change one’s circumstances
- Feeling fatigue and low energy
- Feeling irritable and restless
- Feeling achy or having an upset stomach or a headache that won’t go away even with medication
- Feeling more or less hunger
- Having trouble sleeping (especially waking early and being unable to get back to sleep)
- Sleeping all the time

- Losing interest in the things that one used to find important or pleasurable
- Losing the desire for sex

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder may have some or all of the same symptoms of major depression, during a depressive period. People with bipolar usually, though not always, have at least some degree of mania, almost always preceding a depressive episode. Mania can include risk-taking, increased energy and activity, euphoria and paranoia. In recent years, researchers have discovered that some people who have only depressive episodes, and not mania, may also suffer from bipolar disorder.

Dysthymia

Also known as persistent depressive disorder, dysthymia is chronic and often unrelenting—sometimes for years. Symptoms of dysthymia are the same as for major depression.

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression is a type of depression that occurs soon after a woman has a baby, usually within the first four weeks after giving birth. Though many women can have periods of feeling low after giving birth to a child, postpartum depression is more severe and long lasting. The symptoms are the same as for major depression. Women who have experienced a mood disorder before becoming pregnant are at increased risk for postpartum depression.

Psychotic Depression

This form of depression occurs when a person has severe depression plus some form of psychosis, such as delusions or hallucinations. The psychotic symptoms typically have a depressive theme, such as delusions of guilt, poverty, or illness.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

People with SAD usually experience depression at the same time every year, often during what is winter in whatever hemisphere a person lives, when the days are shorter. Symptoms of SAD occur more often in women than men, and they usually start occurring at a younger age than major depression. The symptoms of SAD are very similar to the symptoms of major depression.

How is depression treated?

There are several ways to treat this mental disorder, including:

- Antidepressants. These medications help improve the way your brain uses certain chemicals that control mood or stress.
- Psychotherapies. Also known as talk therapy, this form of therapy includes talking about one’s

condition and related issues with a mental health professional.

- Brain Stimulation Therapies. These therapies can provide relief for people with severe depression who have not been able to feel better with other treatments.

Special Note: Suicide

One of the most serious symptoms of depression is suicidal thoughts and the desire to take one's own life. People who are suicidal often feel there's no way out of their current circumstances, that nothing will ever change for the better and that the world may be a better place without them. If you or someone you love is feeling this way, it should be taken very seriously, and help should be sought immediately.

A good first step can be calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at all 1.800.TALK (1.800.273.8255).

Some of the warning signs of suicidal feelings include:

- Thinking or talking about killing one's self
- Having many of the symptoms of depression
- A feeling of calm and sometimes happiness following a decision to commit suicide. For friends and loved ones, this may look like a sudden improvement after persistent sadness.
- Taking risks that are unusual, such as standing extremely close to the edge of a precipice or driving dangerously
- Feeling or talking about being hopeless or worthless
- Suddenly visiting or contacting people. The person feeling suicidal often views this as a way to say goodbye
- Wrapping up loose ends—for instance giving away treasured possessions, or making or updating a will

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/basics/health-basics/depressive-disorder-symptoms