



DEPRESSION

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Not Just the Blues



Depression Facts

- ◆ 19.2 million Americans have major or clinical depression
- ◆ Two thirds of people suffering from depression **do not** seek treatment
- ◆ 80% of people who have received treatment significantly improve their lives
- ◆ Economic cost of depression is estimated at \$30.4 billion a year, but the cost of in personal suffering cannot be estimated
- ◆ Women experience depression about twice as often as men
- ◆ By the year 2020, depression will be the number two cause of “lost years of healthy life” worldwide
- ◆ Suicide was the ninth leading cause of death in the United States since 1996

Life is full of good times and bad, happiness and sorrow. But if you’ve been feeling down for more than a few weeks or are having difficulty functioning in daily life, you may be experiencing more than just the blues. Depression is one of the most common health conditions in America affecting nearly 21 million people. Regardless of age, gender, race or income, anyone can experience depression. Depression is a serious but treatable illness.

A recent study showed that people with depressive symptoms spend more days in bed than people with diabetes, arthritis, back problems, lung or intestinal problems.

Although depression is a real medical illness, many people still mistakenly believe it is a personal weakness. The precise cause of depression is unknown. However, it is believed that a variety of biochemical, genetic and environmental factors may cause depression.

Depression comes in several forms and its symptoms and severity can vary from person to person.

Three of the most common types of depressive disorder are major depression, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder. Within these types are variations in the number of symptoms, severity and dura-

tion.

More than eighty percent of people with depression can be treated successfully.

Asking for help takes tremendous courage. Long-term, expensive treatment is seldom necessary. Treatment for most people with depression involves antidepressant medications or counseling; or both. It sometimes takes a few tries to find the right treatment, and it could take several weeks for the medication to start working.

Change will not come overnight, but with the right treatment, depression can be controlled effectively.

Symptoms of Depression

Mood, thoughts, physical health, and behavior are all affected by depression.

Depression is more common among women. Men often experience depression differently than women and may have different ways of coping with the symptoms. Depression can be very different in different people or in the same person over time.

Symptoms of depression in-

clude:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Feeling of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were enjoyed
- Decrease energy, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Not able to sleep
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Ongoing aches and pains that do not go away
- Thoughts of suicide or making suicide attempts