

## Depression and other Illnesses

Depression often co-exists along with other mental and physical illnesses. Substance abuse, eating disorders and anxiety disorders are often made worse by depression. Recent studies have shown that once depression is treated other co-existing conditions might improve.

## Treatments for Depression

The good news is that depression is one of the most responsive to treatment of all mental illnesses.

**Medication**-There are dozens of medications to treat depression. Working closely with your doctor to find the best one for you will help you on the road to recovery.

**Talk Therapy**-Is an important part of the treatment of depression. It can sometimes work alone or with other forms of treatment. People that have severe forms of depression may not be able to benefit from talk therapy until the symptoms have been lessened by other means of treatment.

**Electroconvulsive Therapy**- This is intended for people with severe depression. It is never forced on anyone. When medication and talk therapy do not work, this can be an alternative treatment.

## How long does Depression last?

The depressed feelings we feel after a serious loss or disappointment may last for a short or long period of time. How long depends on the person, the severity of the loss, and the support available to help the person to cope with it.

Clinical depression may also last for short or long periods. It rarely becomes permanent. Without professional treatment, it may end naturally after several weeks or months. With treatment, it may end much more quickly.

## What can family and friends do?

It can be difficult to be with and help someone who is seriously depressed. Some people who are depressed keep to themselves, while others may not want to be alone. They may react strongly to the things you say or do. It is important that you let them know it's okay to talk about their feelings and thoughts. Listen and offer support rather than trying to contradict them or talk them out of it. Let them know you care. Ask them how you can help and offer to contact their family doctor or mental health professional. Try to be patient and non-judgmental. Most of all, don't do it alone – get other people to provide help and support too.



# Depression



Box 403, 203 Patricia St.  
Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0  
Phone~ (306) 865-3064  
Fax~ (306) 865-3391

hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net  
www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca

24 Hour Crisis Line  
(North East Region)  
1-800-611-6349

# What is Depression

Depression is a treatable illness, it involves the chemical in the brain called neurotransmitters. It is not a character flaw or a sign of weakness. You can't just 'snap out of it'. Sometimes it can run in families but you can't catch it from someone. The direct cause of it is still unknown, but it is known that body chemistry can bring on a depressive disorder.

## Symptoms of Depression

- Long periods of sadness and unexplained crying spells
- Noticeable changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Irritability, anger, anxiety, worry, agitation
- Pessimism
- Loss of energy
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to take pleasure in former activities, social withdrawal
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Recurring thoughts of death and suicide

If you experience 5 or more of these symptoms for more than two weeks, consult your doctor.

## Two Types of Depression

**Major Depressive Disorder**-People who suffer from this have had at least one major depressive episode with 5 or more symptoms that last longer than two weeks. For some people this disorder is recurrent, which means they have episodes every so often, like once a month, once a year.

**Dysthymia**-This is a chronic moderate type of depression. People with this are often unaware that they have an illness because they are able to go about their normal day to day lives. Their functioning isn't greatly impaired but they are often irritable and complain of stress often.

People of all ages, races, and ethnic groups can suffer from depression, Although it can happen at any age, it frequently develops between the ages of 25 and 44.

## Depression in Children

As many as one in every 33 children suffer from depression. If they experience 5 out of the symptoms in over a two week period your child may be clinically depressed. Other warning signs for children are headaches, missing school, social isolation, and reckless behavior. Poor parenting does not cause depression. Research has shown that early diagnosis and treatment can and might lessen future depressive episodes.

## Depression and Women

Women are twice as likely as men to develop depression. One in four women will experience clinical depression in their life. The hormonal changes in pregnancy, menstruation, miscarriage, the postpartum period and menopause can trigger depression.

## Depression and Men

Men are less likely to suffer from clinical depression. Men are also less likely to seek help for depression and doctors are less likely to suspect depression in men. Depression in men is often masked by drug and alcohol abuse or by the socially acceptable habit of working long hours. Depression normally shows in men not by feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, but more as irritability and being angry.

## Causes of Depression

There is no one cause of depression, neither is it fully understood. The following factors may make some people more prone than others to react to a loss or failure with a clinical depression:

- Specific, distressing life events
- A biochemical imbalance in the brain
- Psychological factors, like a negative view of life

