

# Depression in the elderly

Am I sad  
or  
Am I depressed?



Your environment provides:

- ♥ Education
- ♥ Support

## What is Depression?

A mental disturbance, typically with lack of energy and difficulty in maintaining concentration or interest in life, accompanied by feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy.



## Difference between Sadness and Depression

Although depression is often thought of as being an extreme state of sadness, there is a vast difference between sadness and depression.

Sadness is a transient feeling that passes as a person comes to term with his troubles. It is a natural reaction to painful circumstances, something we will all experience at some point in our lives. The sad person feels bad, but continues to cope with living.

Depression, however, is a mental illness with many more symptoms than an unhappy mood. Depression can linger for weeks, months or even years causing a person to feel overwhelmed, and hopeless with impaired functioning in daily life.

## What causes Depression?

- ♥ Health status - People with chronic conditions
- ♥ Gender - Women are more susceptible to Depression than males
- ♥ Socioeconomics - Affects people from lower socioeconomic groups
- ♥ Environment - Lack of emotional support, being labeled antisocial
- ♥ Social factors - Prolonged stress, loss of a loved one and traumatic events
- ♥ Lifestyle factors - Poor diet, lack of exercise, poor sleep and lack of leisure time including fun and recreational activities
- ♥ Personality - Negative attitude
- ♥ Losses - loss of a spouse or other family member
- ♥ Awareness of time running out
- ♥ Side effects of certain medication



# Symptoms of Depression

- ♥ Loss of interest in acts of pleasure, hobbies and socialisation
- ♥ Reduced physical activity
- ♥ Inability to think clearly or concentrate
- ♥ Feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and worthlessness
- ♥ Feeling 'blue' and 'down in the dumps'

## Other symptoms often experienced

- ♥ Malnutrition
- ♥ Weight loss or gain
- ♥ Increased ill health
- ♥ Anxiety
- ♥ Self neglect
- ♥ Suicidal ideation



## Who gets Depression ?

Depression is one of the most common forms of mental illness, affecting both men and women, both young and old. Certain risk factors may predispose one to developing depression for example family history, early childhood experience, stress, marital status, work status and physical illness.

## What is the treatment ?

There are many effective ways to deal with depression, including exercise, talk therapy, medication, natural supplements, and lifestyle changes. The best way to treat depression is to become as informed as possible about the treatment options, and then tailor them to meet your needs.

## What is the outcome/ prognosis?

Depression is often irreversible with prompt and appropriate treatment. However, if left untreated, depression may result in the onset of physical, cognitive and social impairment. It may also delay the recovery from medical illness and surgery, increase utilization

## Facts about Depression

- ♥ It is not a natural part of ageing
- ♥ It is common in later life
- ♥ Often irreversible without prompt and appropriate treatment
- ♥ It is the most prevalent and treatable mental disorder
- ♥ Depression rates are higher in people with chronic conditions and older people living in long term or residential care and hospitals



## When a loved one has Depression

Depression may make you feel isolated, but you're not the only one affected by your struggle. Your family and friends love you and church members care about your welfare and form the basis of your social network. Include community organizations, volunteer groups, and any other individual or group that touches your life and this will help you cope with your condition. Communication and support is vital. To enable you to maintain a satisfying lifestyle.



## Where to seek help

- ♥ Your Doctor/Specialist
- ♥ Nursing/Residential care staff
- ♥ Friends and family
- ♥ Church members

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