

An Ounce of Prevention

Complimentary
Issue 293

September 2021

Printed by:
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What is Depression?

CAMH

Depression is much more than simple unhappiness.

Clinical depression, sometimes called major depression, is a complex mood disorder caused by various factors, including genetic predisposition, personality, stress, and brain chemistry. While it can suddenly go into remission, depression is not something people can "get over" by their own effort.

Causes & Risk Factors

There is no single cause of depression.

Potential triggers of depression include:

- genetic or family history of depression
- psychological or emotional vulnerability to depression
- biological factors such as imbalances in brain chemistry and in the endocrine/immune systems
- major stress in the person's life.

Depressive symptoms may be:

- the result of another illness that shares the same symptoms (e.g., lupus, hypothyroidism)
- a reaction to another illness (e.g., cancer, heart attack)
- caused by neurological changes resulting from a physical illness (e.g., stroke).

Clinical depression needs to be managed over a person's lifetime. Depression, like disorders such as diabetes, can be effectively managed and controlled by combining a healthy lifestyle and treatments. Watching for early warnings of relapse may also prevent a full depressive episode.

7 Common Types of Depression

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Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)

When people use the term *clinical depression*, they are generally referring to major depressive disorder (MDD). Major depressive disorder is a mood disorder characterized by a number of key features:

- Depressed mood
- Lack of interest in activities normally enjoyed
- Changes in weight
- Changes in sleep
- Fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Difficulty concentrating

- Thoughts of death and suicide

Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD)

Dysthymia, now known as persistent depressive disorder, refers to a type of chronic depression present for more days than not for at least two years. It can be mild, moderate, or severe. People might experience brief periods of not feeling depressed, but this relief of symptoms lasts for two months or less. While the symptoms are not as severe as major depressive disorder, they are pervasive and long-lasting.

PDD symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness
- Loss of interest and pleasure
- Anger and irritability
- Feelings of guilt
- Low self-esteem
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Sleeping too much
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Changes in appetite
- Trouble concentrating

Treatment for persistent depressive disorder often involves the use of medications and psychotherapy.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder characterized by periods of abnormally elevated mood known as mania. These periods can be mild (hypomania) or they can be so extreme as to cause marked impairment with a person's life, require hospitalization, or affect a person's sense of reality. The vast majority of those with bipolar disorder also have episodes of major depression. In addition to depressed mood and markedly diminished interest in activities, people with depression often have a range of physical and emotional symptoms which may include:

- Fatigue, insomnia, and lethargy
- Unexplained aches, pains, and psychomotor agitation
- Hopelessness and loss of self-esteem
- Irritability and anxiety
- Indecision and disorganization

Postpartum Depression (PPD)

Pregnancy can bring about significant hormonal shifts that can often affect a woman's moods. Depression can have its onset during pregnancy or following the birth of a child.

Currently classified as depression with peripartum onset, postpartum depression (PPD) is more than that just the "baby blues."

Mood changes, anxiety, irritability, and other symptoms are not uncommon after giving birth and often last up to two weeks. PPD symptoms are more severe and longer lasting.

Such symptoms can include:

- Low mood, feelings of sadness
- Severe mood swings
- Social withdrawal
- Trouble bonding with your baby
- Appetite changes
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling inadequate or worthless
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby
- Thoughts of suicide

PPD can range from a persistent lethargy and sadness that requires medical treatment all the way up to postpartum psychosis, a condition in which the mood episode is accompanied by confusion, hallucinations, or delusions.

If left untreated, the condition can last up to a year. Fortunately, research has found that treatments such as antidepressants, counseling, and hormone therapy can be effective.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

Among the most common symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) are irritability, fatigue, anxiety, moodiness, bloating, increased appetite, food cravings, aches, and breast tenderness.

PMDD symptoms may include:

- Extreme fatigue
- Feeling sad, hopeless, or self-critical
- Severe feelings of stress or anxiety
- Mood swings, often with bouts of crying
- Irritability
- Inability to concentrate
- Food cravings or bingeing

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

If you experience depression, sleepiness, and weight gain during the winter months but feel perfectly fine in spring, you may have a condition known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), currently called major depressive disorder with seasonal pattern.

SAD is believed to be triggered by a disturbance in the normal circadian rhythm of the body. Light entering through the eyes influences this rhythm, and any seasonal variation in night/day pattern can cause a disruption leading to depression.

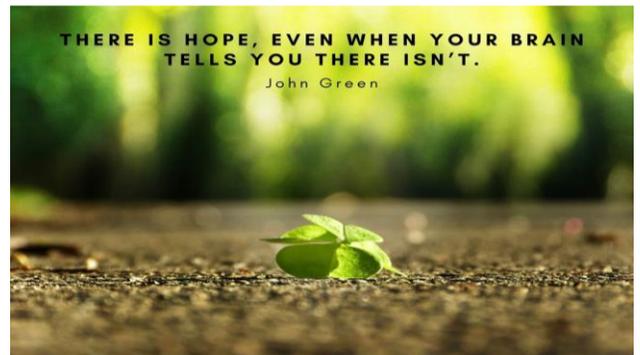
SAD is more common in far northern or far southern regions of the planet and can often be treated with light therapy to offset the seasonal loss of daylight.

Atypical Depression

Do you experience signs of depression (such as overeating, sleeping too much, or extreme sensitivity to rejection) but find yourself suddenly perking up in face of a positive event?

Based on these symptoms, you may be diagnosed with atypical depression (current terminology refers to this as depressive disorder with atypical features), a type of depression that doesn't follow what was thought to be the "typical" presentation of the disorder. Atypical depression is characterized by a specific set of symptoms related to:

- Excessive eating or weight gain
- Excessive sleep
- Fatigue, weakness, and feeling "weighed down"
- Intense sensitivity to rejection
- Strongly reactive moods



*****Net News*****

Here are some web sites you & your family may find helpful.

Four Lessons from Your Anxious Brain

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/well/mind/anxiety-brain.html>

How To Get Your Relationship Back On Track Podcast

https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/how-to-get-your-relationship-back-on-track/id1498172564?i=1000518642529&utm_source=email&utm_medium=mm&utm_campaign=MM_454_Stop%20the%20World

How To Support Adult Children Struggling With Mental Health

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/07/well/family/young-adults-mental-health.html>

Self- Help Corner:

Alcoholics Anonymous: 780-424-5900

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Al-Anon/Alateen: 780-433-1818

Support Network / Referral Line: 211

Distress Line: 780 482-4357

Cocaine Anonymous: 780-425-2715

Access 24/7 – 780 424 2424

Informative Links:

The National Women's Health Information Center:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/>