

TEENAGE DEPRESSION

What is Depression:

DEPRESSION IS A COMMON AND SERIOUS MEDICAL ILLNESS THAT NEGATIVELY AFFECTS HOW YOU FEEL, THE WAY YOU THINK AND HOW YOU ACT. FORTUNATELY, IT IS ALSO TREATABLE. DEPRESSION CAUSES FEELINGS OF SADNESS AND/OR A LOSS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES YOU ONCE ENJOYED. IT CAN LEAD TO A VARIETY OF EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS AND CAN DECREASE YOUR ABILITY TO FUNCTION AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME.

Symptoms must cause distress

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Symptoms must last for at least two weeks

- FEELING SAD OR HAVING A DEPRESSED MOOD
- LOSS OF INTEREST OR PLEASURE IN ACTIVITIES ONCE ENJOYED
- CHANGES IN APPETITE – WEIGHT LOSS OR GAIN UNRELATED TO DIETING
- TROUBLE SLEEPING OR SLEEPING TOO MUCH
- LOSS OF ENERGY OR INCREASED FATIGUE
- FEELING WORTHLESS OR GUILTY
- THOUGHTS OF DEATH OR SUICIDE
- AGITATION OR RESTLESSNESS
- SLOWED THINKING, SPEAKING OR BODY MOVEMENTS
- FREQUENT COMPLAINTS OF UNEXPLAINED BODY ACHES AND HEADACHES, WHICH MAY INCLUDE FREQUENT VISITS TO THE SCHOOL NURSE
- SOCIAL ISOLATION
- POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OR FREQUENT ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL
- LESS ATTENTION TO PERSONAL HYGIENE OR APPEARANCE
- ANGRY OUTBURSTS, DISRUPTIVE OR RISKY BEHAVIOR, OR OTHER ACTING-OUT BEHAVIORS
- DIFFICULTY THINKING, CONCENTRATING OR MAKING DECISIONS

Treatment

A combination of both psychotherapy and medication has been found to be the most effective treatment for depression.

- CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) works by changing self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.
- SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) increase the level of serotonin (a chemical related to depression) in the brain.

Causes of Depression

- **Brain chemistry**– Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that carry signals to other parts of your brain and body. When these chemicals are abnormal or impaired, the function of nerve receptors and nerve systems changes, leading to depression.
- **Hormones**– Changes in the body's balance of hormones may be involved in causing or triggering depression.
- **Inherited traits**– Depression is more common in people whose blood relatives – such as a parent or grandparent – also have the condition.
- **Early childhood trauma**– Traumatic events during childhood, such as physical or emotional abuse, or loss of a parent, may cause changes in the brain that increase the risk of depression.
- **Learned patterns of negative thinking**– Teen depression may be linked to learning to feel helpless – rather than learning to feel capable of finding solutions for life's challenges.