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# Mental Health News: Depression

Depression is the number one public health problem in America, and is the most commonly heard complaint in doctors' offices.

## Symptoms

Are you or someone you know suffering from depression? If so, you are not alone, millions of people suffer from this debilitating illness. People with depression will often exhibit the following symptoms:

- Persistent sad or empty mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities.
- Decreased energy, fatigue;
- Sleep disturbances.
- Changes in appetite.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.
- Restlessness or irritability.
- Excessive crying.
- Chronic aches and pains that do not respond to treatment.

It is suggested by mental health professionals that a person suffering from depression undergo a thorough

examination if four or more of these symptoms are present for more than two weeks and are interfering with their work or family life.

## Treatment

More than 80% of people with depression are successfully treated. Long-term, expensive treatment is seldom necessary. Modern treatment for most people with depression entails antidepressant medications and short-term talk therapy. Remember, seeking treatment for depression does not imply a lack of mental, physical, emotional or moral character. Asking for help takes tremendous courage.

## Self-Help

There are also activities you can do yourself to help alleviate depression, including:

- Keep a journal.
- Listen to your favorite music.

- Avoid being alone.
- Hug someone.
- Eat well.
- Make a fancy dinner and invite a friend.
- Take a bubble bath.
- Rent funny movies.
- Go for long walks.
- Go dancing.
- Spend time with a child.
- Phone a friend.
- Read newspaper comics.
- Do something nice for yourself or for others.
- Adopt a pet.



## Did you know...?

You are not alone. Depression affects millions of people. In fact, one in twenty Americans currently suffers from depression severe enough to require medical treatment.