

Depression

What is Depression?

Clinical depression is a very common but serious illness. It is one of the most frequently occurring mental illnesses affecting 5-8 percent of the American population at any given time. It is estimated that 1 out of 10 Americans experience an episode of depression at some point in their lives. Depression affects both sexes, with a higher incidence in women. Research shows that depression occurs 70 percent more frequently in women than men.

Depression is often associated with a "down" mood that lingers for an extended period of time. While instances of depression are a normal part of life, symptoms that last over two weeks may be a sign of clinical depression.

What causes depression?

Like most medical conditions, the exact causes of depression are difficult to identify. However, it is understood that depression does not have one single cause. Causes may include seasonal changes, hormonal imbalances, and other physical or interpersonal changes. There are also certain biological, genetic, and emotional factors that increase the likelihood that depression may develop. Research has even indicated that the use of drugs and alcohol may trigger feelings of depression.

Warning signs to the onset of episodes of depression are sometimes difficult to recognize. While bad life experiences, stress, low self-esteem, or family history of depression may contribute to one's chances of becoming depressed, some instances of depression may occur without identifiable causes.

What are the symptoms of depression?

- Consistent feelings of sadness, helplessness, guilt, or worthlessness
- Loss of pleasure or interest in normal activities
- Inability to concentrate or make firm decisions
- Loss of energy, trouble sleeping or oversleeping
- Change in appetite (i.e., loss of appetite or over-eating)
- Talk or thoughts of death or suicide

Treatment of depression

Research has indicated that depression is a mental illness that is highly treatable.

Between 80-90% of people suffering from depression respond to some form of treatment. There are primarily two types of treatments for people who suffer from depression:

Psychotherapy: Short-term therapy that focuses on improving behavior, thinking, and emotional response. This approach has been shown to be an effective treatment for depression.

Medication: In some cases, medications are prescribed. Medications can be used in conjunction with psychotherapy or by themselves.

Things you need to know

Depressive episodes can make a person feel exhausted, worthless, helpless and hopeless. Such negative thoughts and feelings make people feel like giving up. It is important to realize that these negative views are part of the depression and typically do not accurately reflect an individual's situation. Negative thinking fades as treatment begins to take effect. Help is available and most depression can be treated.

Treatment can increase the chances for full recovery and decrease the likelihood of relapses.

For More Information:

Student Health Services 619-594-5281
 Health Promotion. 619-594-4133
 Visit Our Website at <http://shs.sdsu.edu>
 Facebook/Twitter. AZTEHealth
 Counseling & Psychological Services. 619-594-5220
 SDSU Psychology Clinic. 619-594-5134

Emergencies:
 San Diego Crisis Team. 619-236-3339
 24-hour Crisis Intervention/
 Suicide program. 800-479-3339