

How Do I Know If I'm Depressed?

What Does Depression Feel Like?

In the past month, have you had little interest or pleasure in doing things? Are you feeling down, sad, or hopeless?

If the answer to either question is “yes,” you may suffer from depression. Depression is a feeling of sadness that lasts for many weeks and does not go away. It interferes with your daily activities and may keep you from eating, sleeping, or enjoying yourself. You may also feel more tired than usual and have difficulty concentrating or remembering.

Depression is not just "feeling blue" or "down in the dumps." It is not just being sad or feeling grief after a loss. Depression is a medical disorder — just like diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease — that day after day affects your thoughts, feelings, physical health, and behaviors.

What Causes Depression?

Depression is usually caused by low levels of special brain chemicals that change the way the brain sends messages. These brain chemicals can change as we get older, but they can also change after a time of stress, after a medical illness, or after taking certain medications.

Like many medical disorders, depression has an effective treatment that can relieve the bad feelings and thoughts. Treatment is available from your family doctor.

When Should I Seek Help?

If you think you or someone you know might have depression, seek help quickly. The longer treatment is delayed, the more difficult depression is to treat. Remember, depression is not caused by personal weakness, laziness, or lack of will power. It is a medical illness that can be treated.