

ADVANCING EDUCATION
INCOME AND HEALTH

SUPPORT
UP
TING
TODAY

understanding **Depression**

What is Depression?
Depression is a medical condition that affects thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physical health. There are many types of depression, but the most common is Major Depressive Disorder. Other types of depression are: Dysthymia, and Bipolar Depression. Depression can be treated, and there are many ways to get help. If you are having thoughts of suicide, or if you are in danger, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Signs and Symptoms of Major Depression
A person may have depression if he or she has the following symptoms and several of them that last weeks at one time that should be reported to a health care provider:
• Persistent sad, anxious, or hopeless mood
• Loss of interest or enjoyment in normal daily activities
• Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
• Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
• Thoughts of death or suicide
• Irritability or hostility
• Unexplained weight loss or gain due to appetite changes
• Decreased or no energy
• Constant or nearly constant fatigue
• Trouble sleeping or too much sleep
• Difficulty concentrating, remembering, and making decisions
• Little or no interest in participating in sex
• Thoughts of death or suicide

Who is at Risk for Depression?
Depression can affect anyone, but certain people are at a higher risk for depression:
• People with a family history of depression
• People who have experienced a major life event, such as the death of a loved one, divorce, or job loss
• People who have a chronic medical condition, such as heart disease, diabetes, or cancer
• People who have a history of mental health problems
• People who are taking certain medications, such as steroids or beta-blockers
• People who are taking certain drugs, such as alcohol or recreational drugs
• People who are taking certain hormones, such as thyroid medication
• People who are taking certain birth control pills
• People who are taking certain antidepressants
• People who are taking certain painkillers
• People who are taking certain antibiotics
• People who are taking certain chemotherapy drugs
• People who are taking certain cancer treatments
• People who are taking certain immunosuppressants
• People who are taking certain blood thinners
• People who are taking certain blood pressure medications
• People who are taking certain cholesterol medications
• People who are taking certain diabetes medications
• People who are taking certain thyroid medications
• People who are taking certain hormone replacement therapy
• People who are taking certain hormone therapy
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Areas of the Brain Affected by Depression
The brain is a complex organ, and many areas are affected by depression. The areas of the brain affected by depression include:
• Hypothalamus
• Pituitary gland
• Amygdala
• Prefrontal cortex
• Hippocampus
• Nucleus accumbens
• Basal ganglia
• Cerebellum
• Brainstem
• Spinal cord
• Peripheral nervous system

The Limbic System
The limbic system is a group of brain structures that are involved in emotion, memory, and behavior. The limbic system includes the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, amygdala, and hippocampus.

The Role of Neurotransmitters
Neurotransmitters are chemicals that help the brain communicate. The neurotransmitters that are affected by depression include:
• Serotonin
• Dopamine
• Norepinephrine
• GABA
• Glutamate
• Acetylcholine
• Histamine
• Endocannabinoids

Feeling
lonely?
1 in 5
people are
affected by
depression
Loneliness
help

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IS A GROUP EFFORT

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