



FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR IF YOU NOTICE ANY SIGNS THAT MIGHT BE SUGGESTIVE OF DEPRESSION, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTHCARE TEAM. THEY CAN ASSIST WITH PROPER DIAGNOSIS, RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES.

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Late-life depression

For patients and visitors

We make it possible.

What is depression?

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

LATE LIFE DEPRESSION is a serious illness caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Biological, psychological, and/or social factors can all play a role in triggering depression. Triggers may vary and may include significant life changes and high levels of stress. Late life depression is very treatable when it is recognized and properly taken care of.

WARNING SIGNS

- Feeling sad
- Eating more or less than usual
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Difficulty thinking or remembering things
- Low energy
- Thoughts of suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable

HIGH RISK FACTORS FOR DEPRESSION

- Recently bereaved
- Socially isolated
- Memory problems
- Chronic illness
- Onset of new illness, e.g. dementia, Parkinson's, stroke
- Ongoing sleep problems
- Onset of anxiety
- Change in eating habits
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Alcohol abuse/misuse
- Recurrent or prolonged hospitalization

MANIFESTATIONS OF LATE VS. EARLY DEPRESSION

Typical Symptoms	Older Adults	Younger Adults
Anxiety	✓	
Appetite	✓	✓
Constipation	✓	
Fatigue	✓	✓
Irritability	✓	
Pain	✓	
Loss of libido	✓	✓
Poor concentration	✓	✓
Poor memory	✓	

DEPRESSION PREVENTION

- Take medications as prescribed. It may take some time for the clinical benefits of anti-depressants to become evident. Regular review of medications by a doctor is necessary.
- Continue to take medications as prescribed even after symptoms improve. Medication may be required for several months after symptoms subside to prevent relapse.
- Promote daily exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet and maintain a regular sleep pattern.
- Be aware of the impact of depression on other domains of functioning.
- Maintain social engagement.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment options are collaborative and patient centered. Support from family and friends is helpful with the treatment process.

Treatment options are directed towards:

- Symptom management
- Enhanced emotional well-being
- Maintenance of everyday functioning
- Reduced social isolation
- Self-care for chronic medical conditions
- Maintenance of a good quality of life

Positive outcome of treatment:

- Improved emotional, social, and physical functioning
- Improved quality of life
- Enhanced involvement in care delivery

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

You may suffer from depression if five of the following symptoms are evident for at least two weeks:

- Poor sleep (insomnia, hypersomnia)
- Loss of interest
- Feelings of guilt
- Lack of energy
- Poor concentration
- Change in appetite
- Change in motor skills
- Suicidal ideation