

FPSR Health Education- Depression

Depression

Depression is a feeling of sadness, despondency or hopelessness most days and most of every day for at least 2 weeks with accompanying symptoms. Major depression occurs in about 1 in 10 Americans.

Frequent Signs and Symptoms of Depression

- Loss of interest, boredom, inability to enjoy
- Hopelessness, listlessness, and fatigue
- Insomnia, excessive, or disturbed sleep
- Social isolation, feeling of not being useful or needed
- Appetite loss or overeating
- Loss of sex drive
- Difficulty making decisions
- Unexplained crying
- Intense guilt feelings over minor or imaginary events
- Irritability, restlessness, thoughts of suicide
- Various pains such as headache or chest pain without evidence of disease

Risk of Depression Increases With:

- Compulsive, rigid, perfectionist, or highly dependent personalities
- Family history of depression
- Alcoholism
- Failure in occupation, marriage or other interpersonal relationships
- Death or loss of loved one
- Job change or move to new area
- Major illness or surgery
- Passing from one life stage to another such as menopause or retirement

Treating Depression

If symptoms are mild to moderate try self-care ideas. Talk to friends and family, exercise regularly, eat a balanced low-fat diet, avoid alcohol, maintain normal routines, try relaxation techniques, stay as active as possible. Call suicide prevention hotline if you feel suicidal. Seek support groups. Contact social agencies for help, such as the Mental Health America (800) 969-6642, www.mentalhealthamerica.net, or the Depression and Bipolar Support Center at (800) 826-3632.

Antidepressant drugs are often used for persons with prolonged or moderately severe depression.