



Depression



At Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance), we are here to help you take charge of your health. You can use this guide to learn ways to treat depression. Work with your doctor to find out which treatment is best for you.

Sadness is a normal response to life changes, but usually passes after some time. **Depression** is a real illness, and not everyone who has it feels sad. Sometimes depression can start after life events such as trauma, loss of a loved one, moving to a new place, or a stressful situation.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

1. Look for the signs of depression. They can be different for every person.
2. Visit your doctor to share your concerns. If you have depression, there are many treatment options that can help.
3. As you follow your treatment plan, practice habits that help you feel better.

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

You could have depression if you have signs or symptoms like these that last more than **two (2) weeks** and affect your daily life:

- A lot of aches and pains for no known reason.
- Changes in your eating, sleep, or weight.
- Guilty, helpless, nervous or grouchy.
- Hard time with focus or recall.
- Less interest in the things you used to enjoy.
- Restless or trouble sitting still.
- Sad, hopeless, or “empty” mood.
- Tired all the time; moving or talking more slowly.

DEPRESSION AFFECTS PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

Women have depression more often than men. Feelings of sadness and guilt are common.

Some women have depression after they have a baby. This is called postpartum depression. If it's not treated, it can cause serious problems for the mother and the baby.

Men are more likely to be very tired, grouchy, and sometimes angry. They may lose interest in things they once enjoyed, have sleep problems, and hide their feelings with the misuse of alcohol or drugs. They are less likely to seek help.



Younger children can have depression. They might pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent, or worry that a parent may die.

Older children and teens with depression may get into trouble at school, sulk, and be irritable. They may have symptoms of other problems, like anxiety, eating disorders, or substance abuse.

Older adults may be less likely to admit to feelings of sadness or grief. They are more likely to have health problems that may lead to depression.

IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE DEPRESSION, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

TREATMENT CAN HELP.

- Schedule a visit with your doctor.
- Tell them all the symptoms you have had and what's going on in your life.
- They will try to figure out the cause of the symptoms, and what might help.

No two people are affected the same way by depression and there is no “one size fits all” for treatment. It may take some trial and error to find the treatment that works best for you.

Talk therapy (also called psychotherapy) can help you understand the depression and how to deal with it. It can teach you new ways of thinking and acting and help you work through what is going on in your life.

If you need to take **medicines**, remember that it takes some time (often two (2) to four (4) weeks) for them to work. Talk to your doctor about any side effects that you have, including if you feel extra sad or have thoughts of suicide. Do not stop taking your medicine without first talking to your doctor.

There are other treatments for severe depression. Talk to your doctor about your options if talk therapy and medicine are not enough.



HERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO TO FEEL BETTER:

- ✓ Get regular exercise, like biking or walking, and eat healthy.
- ✓ Hang out with people who make you feel good. Let others help you.
- ✓ Spend more time outdoors in the daytime. Daylight can sometimes make a difference! Some people feel sad in the colder months, when the days are shorter.

Take it one day at a time. Set a small goal each day that you can do, such as a small task or taking a walk. If you stick to your treatment plan, you should start to feel a little better every day.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN HELP.

Helping someone get treatment is important. Your loved one may not have the energy or desire to ask for help.

Below are some ways to help:

- Do not ignore words or actions that show the person thinks life is worthless. Do not ignore words or actions about hurting themselves or others. Seek help right away.
- Invite the person to go for walks or outings.
- Give emotional support through talking and careful listening. Do not ignore feelings, but offer hope.
- Offer to go to the doctor with your loved one and help them follow their treatment plan.
- Remind them that with time and treatment, they will feel better.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

To find a behavioral health care provider, please call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments

(CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

CRISIS SUPPORT

If you or someone you know struggles with life situations or thoughts and feelings, you can talk to a crisis counselor from the **Crisis Support Services of Alameda County** toll-free at **1.800.309.2131**.

THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE OR HARM

If you have thoughts of suicide, or if you are concerned about a friend or loved one, please call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** toll-free at **1.800.273.8255**.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or others, seek help **right away** by going to a hospital emergency room or calling **911**.

Do you need more support?

Please call Alliance Health Programs

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4577**

Toll-Free: **1.855.891.9169**

People with hearing and speaking impairments

(CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

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