

What is depression?

Depression is a disorder that affects your body, moods, behaviors, and thoughts. It can change the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. Everyone feels depressed at times and this is normal. When depressed feelings last for more than a month, interferes with going to school or work, and causes problems being with others, then it is an illness.

Check off any signs listed below that you have had for 4 weeks or more. You may have major depression if you have 5 or more of these signs, including one of the first two signs (➔) listed. If these signs last for at least 2 weeks, see your doctor for a diagnosis and treatment.

- Loss of interest and pleasure in things you used to enjoy, including sex
- Feeling sad, blue, or down in the dumps. Crying a lot
- Feeling slowed down or restless and unable to sit still
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Feeling tired
- Feeling irritable and upset
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Changes in appetite with weight loss or gain
- Changes in sleep, such as you can't get to sleep or you sleep too much

- Thoughts of death or wanting to harm yourself
- Withdrawing from others
- Physical problems like headaches, stomach aches, backaches



What are the risk factors for major depression?

Depression is usually caused by a number of factors:

◆ Physical factors:

- Changes in the makeup of the brain
- Medicines like steroids and some blood pressure medicine
- Illness that results in major changes in your life
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Stress

