



What is depression?

Most of us have experienced feeling sad, moody or low at times. Depression is much more than feeling a little sad. It is a medical condition and can have a significant impact on those who experience it.

Depression can take away the ability to take pleasure or interest in everyday activities. It can make people feel isolated or alienated from those around them.

A few facts about depression

Approximately 1 in 5 people will experience depression at some point in their lives

Women are affected almost twice as often as men

Depression can be experienced by adults, teenagers and children

Depression affects all people regardless of geography, demographic or social position

Good nutrition, regular exercise and a good sleep pattern can have a positive impact

What causes depression?

There are a number of potential causes of depression. Individuals may be born with a genetic predisposition to depression. Major stressful events such as bereavement can also trigger depressive symptoms.

Depression may also be impacted by factors such as your environment, your personality and your past experience.

Signs and symptoms

Depression can affect different people in different ways and may manifest in a wide variety of symptoms. These may include:

- Feeling sad, anxious or agitated
- Feeling emotionally numb or flat
- Feeling that everything has become too hard
- Feeling guilty or lacking in worth
- Being preoccupied with negative thoughts and seeing the worst in everything
- Finding it an effort to complete even simple tasks
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness or that life is not worth living

You might also experience:

- Poor sleep patterns or feeling tired despite a reasonable nights sleep
- Changes in your weight or your appetite
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol or other substances
- Loss of interest in sexual activity
- Physical aches and pains
- Loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Avoidance of social situations
- Thoughts of self-harm, death or suicide



Help yourself

For the majority of people, depression is treatable once it has been diagnosed.

The following strategies will assist you to manage depression. It is important however to seek professional help to give yourself the best possible opportunity to combat depression.

- 1 BE AWARE**
 - the more you understand about depression and how it impacts you, the better prepared you will be to deal with it.
- 2 RECOGNISE THE WARNING SIGNS**
 - depression can be episodic so being able to recognise early warning signs will help.
- 3 SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP**
 - if you think you need support, reach out to your GP or Benestar.
- 4 KEEP AN EYE ON STRESS**
 - too much stress is problematic for anyone, and even more so for people who are susceptible to depression.
- 5 USE RELAXATION STRATEGIES**
 - try slow breathing, listening to soothing music, visualisation, step outside for a walk, read a book or meditate.
- 6 DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF GOOD HEALTH**
 - regular exercise, a healthy diet and a good sleep routine will have a positive impact.
- 7 TAKE CARE OF STIMULANTS**
 - too much coffee, other caffeinated drinks or alcohol may contribute to you feeling anxious.
- 8 PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR MOOD**
 - do things that make you smile or laugh (laughter is a great way to lift your mood).
- 9 KEEP IN CONTACT**
 - often people feeling depressed will avoid talking with others. Mixing with others might not be easy, but is important.

NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you need assistance to understand or manage depression there is plenty of support available.

If you have any thoughts of suicide or plans to harm yourself, it's really important to seek immediate help. Talk to someone you trust – or reach out to a professional.

Your GP is a good starting point and at Benestar® we're always here to help.

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