

## Depression

It is normal to feel “blue” or “down” every now and then. However, if these feelings last for more than 2 weeks, or have side effects that make even the small things hard to accomplish, you may be suffering from depression. Depression is the feeling of sadness, hopelessness, and disinterest in what is happening around you every day. Depression may begin after a stressful event in your life or because of chemical changes within your brain. Illness, such as diabetes and heart disease, can also trigger depression. When you have a chronic health condition, you may feel “different” from co-workers and family members or be feeling stressed just taking care of your condition.

### Signs and Symptoms of Depression

- Irritable or cranky
- Frequent crying
- Sleep problems: sleeping too much, trouble falling asleep, not being able to stay asleep
- Anxiety or panic feelings worsen
- Decrease in sexual desire
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Concentrating or remembering things is difficult
- Loss of appetite or can't stop eating
- No energy although sometimes you may feel overexcited
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- No longer interested in hobbies or daily activities
- General aches and pains and headaches increase



### Getting Help and Treatment Options

If you have some of these symptoms, talk to your care team. There are physical causes such as poorly controlled health conditions that can cause these symptoms, too. Thyroid problems and medication side effects can also cause many of these symptoms.

- Do NOT stop any medications without speaking with your health care team FIRST.
- You may be referred to a specialist. This is NOT a sign of weakness.



Other treatment options include:

- Professional counseling
- Aerobic exercise, such as running or swimming
- Proactive positive self-talk
- Scheduling activities throughout the day
- Vitamin B6, folic acid or niacin supplements
- Medication

