

DEPRESSION

While all of us experience normal feelings of unhappiness or sadness from time to time, clinical depression is a more serious state of depressed mood which is present all or most of the time, for at least 2 weeks. Depression is common and affects up to one in four people at some time in their lives.



YOUR EAP PROVIDER

Each year in Australia, approximately 1 million adults experience depression. Depression can affect a person's mood, thoughts and behaviours. Symptoms of depression can interfere with a person's daily life, in areas such as school, work and relationships.

There are a range of different types of depression. The symptoms can range from mild to severe. Symptoms of anxiety are also common in people who have depression as the two conditions often occur at the same time.

At Positive Solutions we are here to help. If you feel you might need some assistance to cope with depression, please contact us to make an appointment.

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

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CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

There are many different reasons why people develop depression. Sometimes a combination of factors can be the cause. Examples include:

- **Genetics** (e.g. a family history of depression among close family members)
- **Bio chemical changes in the brain** (e.g. serotonin and dopamine)
- **Ongoing stress** (e.g. problems at work or home, relationship issues)
- **Life events** (e.g. job loss, family separation, or other negative or traumatic events)
- **Personality factors** (e.g. low self esteem, self critical, high levels of sensitivity)
- **Physical issues** (e.g. heart disease, thyroid condition, asthma and diabetes)
- **Some medications, illegal drugs and alcohol abuse** can worsen depression

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Feeling sad, hopeless or depressed
- Loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Crying for no apparent reason
- Low energy, fatigue
- Sleep problems
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Reduced sex drive (libido)
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Socially withdrawn from friends and family
- Suicidal thoughts or plans

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TREATMENT

There are a range of effective treatment options for managing depression. This usually involves a combination of strategies which can include psychological treatment, medication and lifestyle changes.

Self-care strategies for managing depression:

- talking about your feelings to a close friend or family member
- regular physical exercise to help lift mood
- eating a healthy balanced diet
- balancing work, rest and recreation
- regular relaxation strategies
- forming healthy sleep patterns
- planning regular activities into your routine such as social outings

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- www.sane.org
- www.headspace.org.au
- www.lifeline.org.au

TYPES OF DEPRESSION

Major depression

A person with major depression has low mood and/or loses interest or pleasure in their normal activities. They can experience a range of other symptoms such as: negative thoughts, changes in sleep and appetite, fatigue and lack of energy. Their depression symptoms occur for at least two weeks.

Bipolar and cyclothymic disorder

A person with bipolar experiences manic episodes, which are periods of elevated, irritable or euphoric mood with increased energy that lasts at least one week. Some people can experience both high and low moods.

People with cyclothymic disorder alternate between high and low moods. However compared to bipolar disorder, their symptoms are milder and occur less regularly for shorter amounts of time.

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

SAD is a type of depression that relates to changes in the seasons. A person with SAD can experience symptoms of depression in autumn and winter months, with a return to wellness in summer and spring.

Antenatal and postnatal depression

Some women experience depression during their pregnancy (antenatal depression) and/or following childbirth (postnatal depression).

Perinatal depression is a type of depression experienced from pregnancy through to the first year after a baby has been born.

Dysthymic disorder

A person with dysthymic disorder experiences a persistent feeling of depression. They experience depressed mood most of the time, for at least 2 years.

