

DEPRESSION FACT SHEET

What is depression?

Everyone feels down from time to time but when you're depressed that feeling of sadness is more intense and can last for weeks, months, or even years, and can occur for no apparent reason.

Depression is more than just a low mood, it's a serious condition that affects your physical and mental health.

What are the symptoms?

Depression affects men and women, young and old. It affects how you feel about yourself, you might lose interest in doing things you normally enjoy, have irritable feelings and find it hard to concentrate.

Depression makes everyday tasks more difficult.

Symptoms can be a lack of confidence, fatigue, lack energy, have difficulty sleeping, no appetite or sex drive, and complaints of aches and pains. Depression can make you feel anxious and tearful, yet it is more akin to a feeling of numbness than sadness.

If you have had the below symptoms for more than two weeks consult your local GP:

- Felt sad, down or miserable for most of the time
- Lost interest or pleasure in most of your usual activities

What causes depression?

There is no apparent cause of depression yet there are many things linked to its development. Life changing events such as bereavement, loss of employment, family history, drug and alcohol abuse, serious medical illness and even having a baby can cause depression. You can also become depressed for no reason at all.

Everyone is vulnerable to depression; in Australia one in four women and one in six men experience an episode of clinical depression in their life.

Depression is a diagnosable illness, severe depression can end in suicide but with the right treatment this can be avoided.

How to recover from depression?

Most people can make a full recovery from depression but here is no proven way to recover from depression, and it's different for everyone. There is a range of effective treatments, health professionals, and things you can do for yourself that can help you recover and stay well.

Treatments include psychological; talking to a health professional, medical; antidepressants and other medicine; eating well and exercising and generally taking care of your body and mind.

Focussing on the positives and doing the things that used to make you feel good can also help.

If you have the symptoms you might be depressed, seek help from a doctor or talk to one of our Outreach Workers.

