



Recognizing depression in men



Depression affects people differently

Some people feel unhappy, but they don't know why. Other people have symptoms that are more severe, like thoughts of suicide. How often these symptoms happen and how long they last can also vary among different people.

Age and family history can affect how someone experiences depression. Gender is also a factor. **Men and women show depression in different ways.**



Men with depression are more likely to:



Feel tired
or run down



Become frustrated
or irritated



Lose interest in
work, family, and
things they enjoy



Have trouble
sleeping



What is depression?

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder that may cause severe symptoms. Depression affects your ability to feel, think, and handle daily activities. It's common to feel sad, lonely, or angry when you are going through a rough time. You might have trouble sleeping. You might not want to do things you usually enjoy. But when these feelings don't go away, it could be something more. It could be depression.

You are not alone. For many men, depression can make it difficult to get through the day.

A hidden condition

Men may have depression and not even know it. Some men manage their depression in ways that are not healthy.

- Men may use alcohol or drugs to cover up their depression.
- Men hide their emotions and may seem to be angry, irritable, or aggressive.
- Men spend more time at work.

If you have symptoms of depression, you might find it hard to talk about. But asking for help is a strong first step.



Talk with your healthcare provider.

Together, you can figure out a plan to help you feel better.



Men are also more likely than women to worry about what other people think of their depression. But it's important to get help and take an active role in your treatment. That way, you can get the best care possible and get back to doing things you used to enjoy.



Depression and suicide

Men are 4 times more likely than women to commit suicide. But men are less likely than women to show warning signs of suicide, such as talking about it. Also, once they start thinking about taking their own life, men are likely to attempt suicide sooner than women. If you have thoughts of suicide, it's important to get help now. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider right away.



If at any time you feel like giving up or think you might hurt yourself, take action. Call 911, call your healthcare provider, or go to the emergency room right away.

You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Depression can be treated

Often, men with depression don't want to talk about how they're feeling. This may prevent them from getting the treatment they need. It's important to know that depression can be treated.

There are many options for treating depression. Many people do best by using both talk therapy and medicine in their treatment plan.



Talk therapy

With talk therapy, you speak with a mental health counselor about your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Therapy can help you change habits that may be causing your depression or making it worse.

Talk therapy can help you set personal goals, including:

- Finding healthy ways to deal with stress.
- Figuring out your “triggers,” the people or events that make you feel worse.
- Having better relationships with friends and family members.
- Setting up a routine that you feel comfortable with.



Medicines

Depression is often treated with medicines called antidepressants. Medicines affect people in different ways. **Here are a few things you should know about antidepressants:**

- It can take as long as 6–12 weeks for some antidepressants to work their best.
- You might need to try a few different medicines before you find what works best for you.
- Your healthcare provider may need to add another medicine to the one you're currently taking.
- Keep track of which medicines you have tried and tell your healthcare provider how you felt after taking them.

Start the conversation with your healthcare provider

Even though depression is a common condition, it can be difficult to talk about. You may be worried that others might treat you differently. But getting the care you need comes from starting the conversation.

Talk to your healthcare provider about how you are feeling so they can help you find the best care possible.



Check the boxes below that apply to you and share with your healthcare provider. Together, you can find ways to help manage your depression.

What changes have you noticed in your mood?

- ☐ Get angry quickly
- ☐ Are easily annoyed
- ☐ Feel tired all the time

How often do you feel these changes in your mood?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Once in a while

What parts of your life does your mood affect?

- ☐ Ability to focus at work
- ☐ Personal relationships
- ☐ Confidence in decisions

How have you tried to help your mood?

- ☐ Smoking or drinking alcohol
- ☐ Taking breaks
- ☐ Exercising

Taking care of yourself

Medicine and talk therapy are usually effective ways to treat depression. But some changes to your daily life can also help.



These are some things you can try:



Eat right

Eat a variety of healthy foods every day, including lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Also try to reduce how much coffee, soda, and alcohol you drink.



Be more active

Being active can help improve your mood and keep you healthy. It can also give you more energy and help you sleep better. Talk with your healthcare provider before you change your activity level.



Sleep well

Getting too much sleep or not enough sleep can affect your mood. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night. Try to wake up at the same time each morning and go to bed at the same time each night. Avoid taking daytime naps if you have trouble sleeping at night.



Reach out

Talk with friends, family, and other loved ones. Show interest in how they're doing. Ask them questions about what's going on in their lives.



Find support

It might be helpful to talk with people who have had depression. Talk with friends who have gone through something like what you're feeling now. They may have helpful tips for coping. You can also join a support group. It may remind you that you're not alone.



Get involved

Having a hobby may help give you a feeling of pride and success. Think of things you used to enjoy and start doing those things more often. You might want to take classes, do volunteer work, or get involved with local activities or groups.

Managing challenges

Everyone has a “bad day” once in a while. **Even if you have been feeling better, you may have negative thoughts from time to time.** When this happens, try some of the healthy coping methods that have helped you in the past, or talk with your healthcare provider about one that may help you.



For example:

If you feel better when you are with friends

Go out to see a movie together

If it helps to talk with others who have depression

Join a support group to know you're not alone



Knowing your triggers

Sometimes even after you feel better, depression can come back. It is helpful to know the events, or triggers, that can cause symptoms of depression. Think about what makes you want to withdraw, or makes you anxious, nervous, or on edge.

You may relate to one or more of the triggers listed below.

- Stress at work or home
- Lack of sleep or too much sleep
- Money issues
- Time pressures
- Change, such as starting a new job, getting married, or moving

Note down these and other triggers that make you feel anxious, nervous, alone, or sad. **Share these with a trusted friend and your healthcare provider.** Talk about ways you might handle these triggers in the future.

How often do you feel symptoms?



Circle the answer that best matches your experience.

Then, share the results with your healthcare provider.

Do you feel restless or anxious?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Do you have aches and pains?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Do you feel like being around others?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Do you get into arguments easily?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Do you feel stressed at work or at home?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Do you get enough sleep at night?

Usually | Sometimes | Never

Write any other questions or notes you have for your healthcare team.



Tracking your progress

As you continue with your treatment, it might be hard for you to notice the small changes that show you're getting better.

For a week, put a check in the box next to each statement that is true for you that day. Share your results with your healthcare provider or mental health counselor at your next appointment.

Symptoms	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
I feel tired/I'm having trouble sleeping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel frustrated/easily annoyed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've been drinking alcohol/using drugs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm not interested in things I used to enjoy doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've been thinking about death or suicide.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm avoiding my family and friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Treatment	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
I took my medicine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I went to talk therapy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I went to my support group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lifestyle	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
I ate healthy foods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did something active.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I spent time with a friend/family member.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did something I enjoy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Remember, depression affects people differently. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you're feeling and about any changes you notice.



Additional resources

Check out these organizations for more information about depression or how to find help:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

dbsalliance.org | 1-800-826-3632

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

suicidepreventionlifeline.org
1-800-273-8255