

What is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder. It is when a person feels very sad. Depression can change the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. It is not the same as feeling "blue". It is not a sign of personal weakness or something that can be wished away. When a depressed mood stays for a long time or gets in the way of everyday living, it may be a sign of a serious depression that needs professional help.

What causes depression?

There is no one reason why someone develops Depression. Family history, brain chemistry and stress play a big role in producing the illness.

Sometimes Depression is caused by:

- the death of a loved one
- money problems
- family troubles
- difficulties with others
- problems at work

Signs and Symptoms

Not everyone who is depressed has every symptom and the symptoms may change over time.

- Feeling sad – crying for no obvious reason
- Feeling hopeless or empty
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Low energy or feeling tired
- Difficulty thinking or remembering things
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Eating less or more than usual
- Thoughts of suicide

What are the treatments?

Depression can respond well to treatment. There are different types of treatment. The most common and successful approach is combining psychotherapy and anti-depressant medications. Support from family, friends and self-help groups can also be very helpful.