Serious illness
Most common signs of depression:
- An “empty” feeling, ongoing sadness, and anxiety
- Crying too often or too much
- Feeling guilty, helpless, worthless, or hopeless
- Thoughts of death or suicide or a suicide attempt

What is it?
Everyone feels sad or “under the weather” at times. It is part of life. But if those feelings continue for a long time and you begin to lose all hope and joy, it is not normal. This is known as DEPRESSION.

A common idea is that depression comes with getting old; however this is not true. Learn to spot these signs and symptoms of depression and get help.

What causes it?
There is not just one cause for depression; however there are common factors that might cause it:
- Death in the family or serious illness
- Changes in the brain that affect mood
- Increased stress
- Genetics
- Feeling lonely, lack of family or friend support
- Some medications
- Fear of dying
- Serious illness

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It is important to remember that just because you don’t feel sad it does not mean you don’t have depression. Some other clues to look for are:

- Memory problems/hard time focusing
- Anxiety and worries
- Irritability
- Lack of interest in personal care (not showering, not eating, or forgetting medications)
- Unexplained aches and pains, frequent headaches
- Persistent desire to be alone
- Being very tired, lack of energy
- Eating more or less than usual
- Sleep problems, including trouble falling asleep, or sleeping too much
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

These may be signs of depression, a treatable illness. Please consult your doctor.
How can EXERCISE help?

- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
- Allows you to socialize with others
- Reduces risk for health conditions
- Prevents unhealthy weight gain
- Improves overall health

Exercise recommendations from the American Heart Association:

- Moderately intense aerobic exercises such as walking or swimming for 30 minutes/day, or 20 minutes of vigorously intense exercises such as brisk walking and stair climbing, 5 days a week.
- 8-10 strength training exercises, 10-15 repetitions of each exercise twice a week.
- If you are at fall risk perform balance exercises
- 10 minutes of stretching exercises, with 30 second hold of stretch. Repeat each stretch 3 or 4 times.

**Always consult your health care provider before beginning a new exercise routine**

REFERENCES


** All images taken from the 2007 version of Clip Art**