



HEALTH

with

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ARE YOU DEPRESSED, UNDERSTAND IT...!



What is depression?

Everybody seems depressed these days. This is just because of our life style, greed for more money and other materialistic needs. Being realistic in all spheres of life like economy, social, professional and personal, is very important. Let us, however, understand, what is depression. The depression symptoms may vary from individual to individual and can be complex. The symptoms are generally psychological, physical and social.

The psychological symptoms :

Sadness, low mood, feelings of helplessness, losing confidence, low self-esteem, feelings of guilt, intolerance, irritation, lack of interest in routine chores, indecisiveness, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, low sex drive etc.

The physical symptoms :

Lethargy, slow speech, change in appetite, body aches, low libido or lack of interest in sex, changes to menstrual cycle, disturbed sleep etc.

The social symptoms :

Not doing well at work, avoiding social circles and activities, avoiding friends, reduced interests and hobbies, problems in family life etc.

Effects of depression :

In the medical terms, the depression is divided into the following three category

- Mild depression has some impact on daily life.

- Moderate depression has a significant impact on daily life.

- Severe depression makes the activities of daily life nearly impossible. A small proportion of people with severe depression may have psychotic symptoms.

Causes of depression :

The causes of depression

may be different to different human beings. In fact, there is no single cause of depression. However, the following reasons or causes have seen trigger depression : Stressful life, death of a family member or friend, divorce, illness, money matters, problems at work and so on. Any one of such reasons or a combination could lead to depression. Once one goes low, one may start avoiding friends or start drinking or smoking, the depression deepens. Actually, it is a complex process and a number of factors can increase the risk of developing depression :

Stressful life events : Everybody deals with stressful events differently. Most people take time to come to terms with stressful events, e.g. the death of a loved one or a relationship breakdown. In such situations, never stop seeding friends or relatives otherwise the depression may set in

Illness & diseases :

Everybody wants to remain healthy. Hence, if diagnosed with a chronic or life-threatening illness, such as coronary heart disease or cancer, one may go into depression. But think that you are not alone. There are others in this world who have these problems. Take challenge and go for treatments smiling.

Personality traits : Some personality traits like low self-esteem, lack of confidence or being overly self-critical, may become the causes of depression. This could be genetic also sometimes. Have belief in what you do, trust your God if you are religious and try to enjoy what you do.

Giving birth & motherhood :

Many women go into depression after pregnancy.

The reasons could be the hormonal and physical changes, besides the thoughts of more responsibility of a new life etc.

Social isolation :

Sometimes due to some unacceptable actions, the society shuns an individual or the individual gets a feeling of guilt e.g. due to some wrong decision in marriage, getting involved into a crime etc. However, the best way is to realize the truth, explain the situation to self and others and keep connection with the people who understand you to lift your moral and spirits. Anybody can be at fault in life, anybody can commit mistakes but that does not mean to become depressed

Alcohol and drugs :

This is a very big problem. Use of alcohol and drugs can also lead to feelings of depression. Some people try to cope by drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs. But this results into a spiral of depression.

Home remedies for depression :

The moment there are continuous depressing thoughts, understand the cause, discuss with family and friends or consult doctor immediately. There are some proved herbal remedies also. But nothing can be taken without consulting a doctor or qualified herbalist. Never forget that everybody is different and hence, no sure remedy can be formulated for masses, rather the remedies are individual. So keep in mind that the following is only for the general information and not for use without consulting your doctor or herbalist:

1) St. John's Wort :

The herb St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is known as a vita product in folk medicine for nervousness, worry, sadness and poor sleep. The results of over 20 clinical trials have proved that St. John's wort works better than a placebo and is as effective as antidepressants for mild to moderate depression, with fewer side effects. Studies have also shown that St. John's wort is not effective for major depression. It's available at health food stores, drug stores, and online in the form of capsules, tablets,

liquid extracts, or tea. Beware that it may interfere with the effectiveness of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. It is also not recommended for pregnant or nursing women, children, or people with bipolar disorder, liver or kidney disease.

2) Omega-3 fatty acids :

The studies have linked depression with low dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids. Studies have shown that omega-3's together with antidepressants may be more effective than antidepressants alone. Fish such as salmon, sardines, and anchovies are the richest food source of omega-3 fatty acids. Fish oil capsules are considered a cleaner source of omega-3 fatty acids than consuming more fish. However, the fish oil capsules may interact with blood-thinning drugs such as warfarin and aspirin. Fish oil should not be taken 2 weeks before or after surgery.

3) Folic Acid :

The folic is a B vitamin that is often deficient in people who are depressed.

It is found in green leafy vegetables, fruit, beans, and fortified grains. It's one of the most common vitamin deficiencies because of poor diet and some medications. Besides food, folic acid is also available as a supplement or as part of a B-complex vitamin.

4) Diet:

If one is conscious about the diet, several diseases including depression can be avoided. In the case depression :

- **Reduce eating sweets :** Sweets temporarily make feel good as blood sugar levels soar, but may worsen mood later on when they plummet.

- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol :** Caffeine and alcohol both dampen mood. Alcohol temporarily relaxes and caffeine boosts energy, but the effects of both are short-lived. Both can worsen mood swings, anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

- **Vitamin B6 :** Vitamin B6 is needed to produce the mood-enhancing neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine. Although deficiency of vitamin B6 is rare, a borderline deficiency may occur in people taking oral contraceptives, hormone replacement therapy, and drugs for tuberculosis is **Magnesium**

- Most people do not get enough magnesium in their diets. Good sources of magnesium are legumes, nuts, whole grains and green vegetables. Like vitamin B6, magnesium is needed for serotonin production. Stress depletes magnesium. I personally believe, depression is nothing but a state of mind. Always be happy, feel healthy, go for regular exercise, have balanced diet, trust in your abilities, don't try to do anything wrong and if it happens, admit it and try to set the things right, be loving and affectionate, believe in humanity as a whole and not divide humanity in religious and other social factors, take life as a challenge and I don't see any reason why anybody could come into the state of depression.

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