

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

"I don't feel like myself anymore."

"Everything and everybody seems to bother me and I can't feel happy."

"I feel like there's this incredible weight on me and I'm dragging."

"It takes everything I have to get through the day. All I want to do is be alone or sleep."

"Everything I do takes so much effort."

"I get irritated and angry at the simplest and littlest things."

"I feel achy and run down."

People suffering from depression commonly express these feelings. You may not necessarily feel sad or depressed, but you might complain you have a general sense of not being well that makes everyday activities and interactions burdensome.

Common signs and symptoms of depression include:

- depressed mood, including feelings of guilt
- "heavy weight" upon the person
- constant tension, "always wound up"
- frustration
- irritability
- frequent tearfulness and/or crying
- lack of interest in any pleasurable activity—unable to feel pleasure or joy
- poor self-esteem, "I don't feel good about myself"
- hopelessness
- poor appetite
- insomnia, with difficulty falling asleep and/or frequent middle-of-the-night awakening
- dwelling on past events
- constant fatigue or weariness
- no improvement despite a positive change in the environment or events
- difficulty with memory and concentration
- withdrawal from friends and family
- multiple physical complaints such as stomachache or headache that don't get better with conventional treatment
- thoughts of suicide

Experiencing five or more of these symptoms most days for two weeks characterizes major depression and indicates that you should see a health professional.

Feeling a pervasive sense of sadness and agreeing with fewer than five of these categories may mean you are suffering from either major depression or a milder form of depression and still may benefit from treatment.

By Josepha Cheong, MD; Michael Herkov, PhD; Wayne Goodman, MD © 1999-2005
University of Florida Brain Institute