

If you think your depression is severe you should talk with a mental health professional right away. If you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, seek help immediately by notifying your medical provider or calling 911.

There are times when all of us feel blue, sorrowful, or kind of down. True depression is more than this. It affects the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about the world around you. Depression is not something that is imagined or “all in your head”. It is a common illness and treatment can help.

Some Signs of Depression

Depression has certain signs and symptoms. Mark the items that best tell how you have been feeling.

- Feeling sad and/or irritable
- Not enjoying things that used to be fun (being with friends, sports, hobbies, sex)
- Unexpected changes in appetite and/or weight
- Unexpected changes in sleep patterns, sleeping too much, or not sleeping enough
- Feeling tired all the time or having little energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless
- Problems with concentration, memory, and decision-making
- Not caring if you die, thinking about death or even trying to commit suicide

It is important to discuss any of these feelings with your medical provider or clinic counselor.

Understanding the Causes

When a person experiences high levels of stress in their life, such as having a long term illness, relationship problems, and/or money difficulties, they can become depressed. Depression can run in families. Sometimes depression can happen for no reason. People who are depressed see themselves and the world in a negative way.

Treatment

Take a look at your daily life. The following things can help you:

1. A good support system (don't be afraid to ask for help)
2. Learning new ways to handle your stress
3. Regular exercise and getting daily sunlight whenever possible

You may need some medical attention along with professional counseling or “talk” therapy.

For more information, call Postpartum Support International at 1-800-944-4PPD (773), the National Institute of Mental Health at 1-866-615-6464 or your local crisis line, or go to www.postpartum.net.