



SEALS Health News

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about teen Depression

Depressive disorders are characterized by persistent feelings of sadness and worthlessness and a lack of desire to engage in formerly pleasurable activities. Depression is not a passing blue mood, which almost everyone experiences from time to time, but a complex mind/body illness that interferes with everyday functioning. It not only darkens one's outlook, it is commonly marked by sleep problems and changes in energy levels and appetite. It alters the structure and function of nerve cells so that it disrupts the way the brain processes information and interprets experience. Despite feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, depression is a treatable condition. It can be treated with psychotherapy or medi-

cation, or a combination of both. Depression is a common condition in modern life. According to the National Institutes of Health, each year more than 16 million adults in the United States experience at least one

such as loss of a loved one, or loss of a job, increase the subsequent risk of depression. Significant adversity early in life, such as separation from parents or parental neglect or abuse, may create vulnerability to major depression later in life by setting the nervous system to over-respond to stress.



episode of major depression. The likelihood that a person will develop depression at some point in life is approximately 10 percent. Prolonged social stress and major disruption of social ties are known risk factors for depression, and major negative life events



Depression, even in the most severe cases, is a highly treatable disorder. The sooner treatment begins, the more effective it is and the greater the likelihood that recurrence can be prevented.

A depressive disorder is a condition that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It disables motivation and interferes with normal functioning of daily life. It typically causes pain both to the person experiencing the mood disturbance and those who care about him or her.

A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood—by definition, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks. Nor is it a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. Depression tends to be episodic, with bouts lasting weeks or months. Although symptoms tend to remit sponta-

neously over time, some form of treatment is important to reduce the likelihood of recurrent episodes. Appropriate treatment can help most people who suffer from depression.

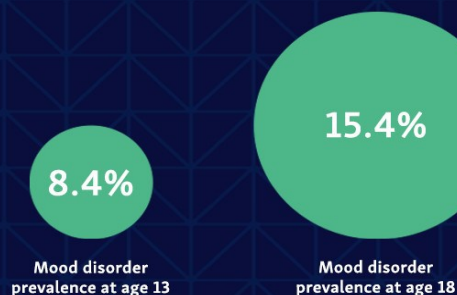
Symptoms

The following signs and symptoms are catalogued by the DSM-5 as signifiers of major depressive disorder and at least five must be present during the extended period of low mood or loss of pleasure in once-enjoyable pursuits. Not everyone experiences every symptom, nor do people experience the same symptoms to the same degree. Symptoms may vary not only between individuals and but over time in the same

individual.

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood most of the day, most days
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed
- Persistent loss of energy or fatigue
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Insomnia, early morning awakening, or oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Significant change in appetite resulting in unintended weight loss or weight gain
- Observable psychomotor agitation or restlessness, or psychomotor slowing
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism; recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts

Adolescence is the peak onset period for depression.



Learn more: childmind.org/2017report



There is no single cause of depression. Rather, evidence indicates it results from a combination of genetic, biologic, environmental, and psychological factors.

Treatment

Depression, even in the most severe cases, is a highly treatable disorder. The sooner treatment begins, the more effective it is and the greater the likelihood that recurrence can be prevented.



Treatment of childhood and adolescent depression consists of psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, or a combination of these. Treatment should correspond to the level of depression, patient preferences, the developmental level of the patient, associated risk factors, and availability of services. Patient and family education about the associated benefits of treatment, expectations regarding patient monitoring, and follow-up should be included.



TEEN..... DEPRESSION

Being a teenager can be tough. There are changes taking place in your body and brain that can affect how you learn, think, and behave. And if you are facing tough or stressful situations, it is normal to have emotional ups and downs.

But if you have been overwhelmingly sad for a long time (a few weeks to months) and you're not able to concentrate or do the things you usually enjoy, you may want to talk to a trusted adult about depression.

Research shows that a number of factors in daily living have a positive effect on mood states. These include a nutrient-rich diet, physical activity, exposure to sunlight and outdoors, and social activity.



Debunking Myths of Teen Depression

Don't be fooled by common myths about depression among teens. Psychiatrist [Leslie Miller, M.D.](#), explains what parents need to know.

Myth #1: “He has everything. He is smart and has friends and supportive parents. What does he have to be depressed about?”

Fact : Depression is a biologically based illness. It can be triggered by stressors, though, and social supports can be protective.

Myth #2: “It’s just a phase.” “Everyone can be sad. It’s normal to be sad.”

Fact : Yes, sadness is normal, and the goal is not to “pathologize” normal behavior and feelings. However, untreated depression can last seven to nine months. During that time period, adolescents can accumulate unhealthy behavior patterns and miss out on important developmental milestones.

Myth #3: “All teens are irritable.” “He just has an attitude.” “He’s not sad — he can’t be depressed.”

Facts : When assessing a teen with irritable mood, it is important to ask about other associated changes, such as change in sleep, appetite, motivation or concentration, to help determine if the teen is experiencing depression.

It is important to use associated signs and symptoms to determine if the irritability is significant and part of depression, or if it’s more developmentally appropriate as part of adolescence.

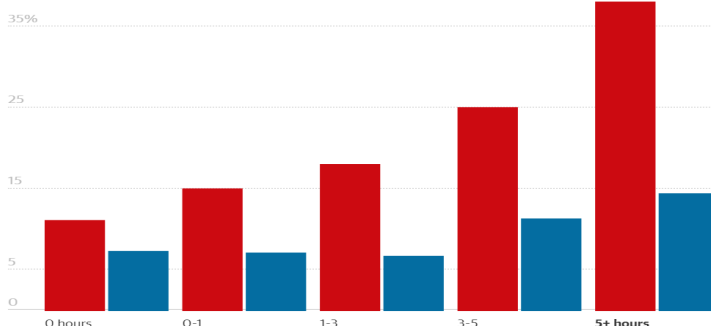
Adolescence is a time period for asserting autonomy and independence, which can lead to an increase in arguments with parents.

Myth #4: “She’s just lazy.” “If she just tried harder...”

Fact : Depression can affect sleep, energy level and motivation, to name a few associated symptoms. Teens cannot simply “mind over matter” or will themselves to overcome depression. They can, however, engage in positive activities to help alleviate symptoms.

Almost 40% of girls who spend more than five hours a day on social media show symptoms of depression

■ Girls with depression ■ Boys with depression



Guardian graphic | Source: Y Kelly, A Zilanawala, C Booker, et al, Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health: Findings From the UK Millennium Cohort Study

FACTS ABOUT TEEN DEPRESSION

An estimated **20%** of teens will experience depression before reaching adulthood.

Spotting Depression Differences

Depression also looks different in men. “Women with depression may come in crying; men may come in acting out in anger,” says Andrew Angelino, M.D., Chair of Psychiatry at Howard County General Hospital. “We’ve taught boys that they don’t cry; so instead of crying, they get angry and threatening.”

The differences appear as early as adolescence, with depressed girls more likely than boys to be dissatisfied with their body image and to have guilt, feelings of failure, difficulty concentrating and sadness. Depressed boys, on the other hand, are more likely to have lost interest in their usual activities and to be more downcast and tired in the morning. As we age, women are more likely to experience stress, sadness and sleep problems when they’re depressed, while men tend toward irritability and impulsive anger.

Maintain balance and social supports.

People are more likely to become depressed when their lives get out of control, says Angelino, whether because of work, family issues or health problems. Keeping a list of priorities and sticking to it will help you avoid becoming overwhelmed and feeling trapped or hopeless. Before you hit a breaking point, reach out to loved ones, support groups and your health care team for resources and encouragement.

Go to school or work every day.

It doesn’t have to be a paid job,

Men and women also cope with depression in different ways, with women more likely to seek help.

Depression also seems to be very common among non-heterosexuals, and very common among people who are transgender or gender-fluid.

Equal-Opportunity Help for Depression

One key to reducing the risks of major depression, says Angelino, is taking action to prevent episodes, particularly if you have a family history of the disease. Here are some of the best ways to do just that.

Live a healthy life.

That means following a healthful diet, finding ways to manage stress and exercising regularly. “Putting on extra pounds increases the stress on your system and stress markers,” says Angelino. That, in turn, increases the risk of depression.

But the benefits of exercise go beyond weight control, says Angelino. “Exercise gives you a sense of accomplishment that’s powerful when fighting feelings of depression.”

In fact, recent research has found that staying active, even in small amounts, boosts self-efficacy—a term for the “I can do this” feeling.

What is Teen Depression?

- ✓ **staid mental health problem**
- ✓ **causes a persistent feeling of despondency**
- ✓ **It affects how the teen thinks, feels and behaves**
- ✓ **It causes emotional, functional and physical problems.**



but it should be something that provides structure to your day and a sense of purpose and accountability. Consider: One report found that following an initial boost in health, retirement increased the risk of clinical

depression by 40 percent. The problem-solving involved in any kind of work provides a sense of accomplishment, Angelino says, which then helps bolster your self-esteem and healthy sense of identity.

Selinsgrove Area School District

Adolescent Connectedness and Adult Health Outcomes

School and family connectedness
during adolescence
may have long-lasting
positive effects
into adulthood.



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Information brought to you by:
CDC, HHS, Psychology Today
Kaiser Permanente,

Benefits of Helping Your Child Feel Connected to School



school, stay in school, and make healthy choices. This sense of belonging is often described as school connectedness. Connected students believe their

As a parent, you want your child to do well in school. You also want your child to be healthy and avoid behaviors that are risky or harmful. Through your guidance and support, you can have great influence on your child's health and learning. But you also have important allies in this effort—the caring adults in your child's school.

Research shows that students who feel a genuine sense of belonging at school are more likely to do well in

parents, teachers, school staff, and other students in their school care about them and about how well they are learning.

Why is it important for your child to feel connected to school? Scientists who study youth health and behavior have learned that strong connections at school can help young people:

- Get better grades
- Have higher test scores



- Stay in school longer
- Attend school more regularly

In addition, students who feel connected to their school are less likely to

- Smoke cigarettes
- Drink alcohol
- Have sexual intercourse
- Carry a weapon or become involved in violence
- Be injured from drinking and driving or not wearing seat belts
- Have emotional distress or eating disorders
- Consider or attempt suicide