



# Depression

# What is Depression?

- A mood disorder that affects how you feel, think, and handle daily activities and routines
- Major depression lasts at least two consecutive weeks and is severe enough to interrupt daily activities

# Myths

- **“It’s not a real illness”**
  - Studies of genetics, hormones, nerve cell receptors, and brain function reveal depression can cause mood-regulating nerve circuits in brain areas to function abnormally
- **“Teens are unhappy by nature”**
  - Many teens are moody, argumentative, but prolonged sadness or irritability is not normal for teens
- **“Depression is just self-pity”**
  - People with depression are not lazy or simply feeling sorry for themselves

# Facts

- **Constructive thinking can help**
  - Accentuating the positive is a practice called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and can ease depression by learning new ways of thinking & behaving
- **Exercise is good medicine**
  - Exercising regularly can improve symptoms of depression and work as well as some medicines for people with mild to moderate depression
- **Hope for better days is real**
  - In the depths of depression, people may think there's no hope for a better life. This hopelessness is part of the illness, not a reality

# Know the Symptoms

- Persistent feelings of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Loss of pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy
- Unusual sleep patterns
- Difficulty concentrating and remembering
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Pain without a clear physical cause
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts

# Risk Factors

- Research suggests depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors
- Many chronic mood and anxiety disorders in adults begin as high levels of anxiety in children

# Recovery and Management

- Be active and exercise
- Set realistic goals
- Spend time with other people, do not isolate yourself
- Let others help you
- Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately
- Discuss decisions with others you trust
- Continue to educate yourself about depression