

Depression Facts

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General Information

- Depression is a serious but treatable health condition that affects more than six million American men.
- Men of all ages, ethnic origins, and walks of life have depression.
- At each stage in life, men face stressful changes and events that may lead to depression.
- Depression can touch every part of a man's life – eating, sleeping, working, studying, and free time. It can take the joy out of life.
- It affects all the people who care about a man – friends, spouses, partners, parents, and children.
- Depression can also lead to more serious issues. It is estimated that over 80% of suicides involve depression. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college-age men. And, a large number of suicides involve men over the age of 70, especially those that are widowed or not married.
- Depression can be managed and overcome. It's a health condition and like other health issues, it can be treated. The first step is getting help.

Types of Depression

Just as there are different signs of depression, there are different types:

- Stress-related depression may be caused by sudden stress or a major event like a breakup, losing a job, bad grades, or the death of a loved one. Stress-related depression can lead to more serious forms of depression.
- Seasonal depression (seasonal affective disorder) tends to come around the same time each year – usually in the fall or winter. Seasonal depression has many of the same signs as depression like feeling down, tired, short-tempered, craving sweets and starches, headaches, and having problems sleeping.
- Chronic depression (dysthymia) is not a severe type of depression, but symptoms can stay with a man for a long time and affect his daily life. Without treatment, chronic depression can lead to major depression. Many people with chronic depression suffer from major depression at least once in their lives.
- Major depression is a severe form that can lead to problems at home, school, and work. It can keep men from being able to study, sleep, and find joy in things like sports, music, friendship, and sex. While some people only suffer from major depression once in their life, others suffer from it many times.
- Bipolar disorder (manic-depression) can involve extreme changes in mood. A man may change from feeling depressed to feeling very active or talkative to feeling “normal.”
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), while not a “type” of depression, typically involves depression symptoms. As a behavioral health disorder, its treatment typically involves antidepressant medications and “talk-therapy”.

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Comorbidities

Other illnesses that are often seen with depression include:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Anxiety disorders
- Chronic illnesses like diabetes, cancer, HIV, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Stroke

Drug Treatment

- The current generation of anti-depressant medications, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), have been in use for over twenty years and proven to be effective for most, though not all people with depression.
- A newer variant, Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors SNRIs have been in use for more than fourteen years with comparably positive results.
- Both classes have been approved by the FDA after exhaustive clinical trials for treatment of depression and are considered safe, despite a "black box" warning issued by the FDA they may increase risk of suicide.
- Though still disputed by FDA officials, an independent (non-pharma) study of suicide risk related to SSRI and SNRI use show no elevation of suicide risk in relation to both adults and adolescents. (NIMH-funded study, published in the January 2006 issue of the American Psychiatric Association's Journal of Psychiatry).