

Depression and Self-Care

Here are some things you can do to help improve your mood and prevent a relapse.

Stay active. Work with your doctor to create an exercise plan. This might include walking or other enjoyable activities.

Eat healthy foods. Food is the most obvious source of energy. It's important to eat regular meals, even if you aren't hungry. If you have a tendency to over-eat, watch your sugar intake and avoid "fad-diets."

Make time to do activities you enjoy. People who are depressed often drop the activities that they enjoy because they just don't have the energy! But these activities are important to your mood!

Spend time with supportive people. While withdrawing from others is common with depression, family and friends are especially important when you are feeling low.

Work toward change. Identify the changes you would like to make in your life. Break these goals down into small, achievable actions. Remember, start with small steps.

Resources

Your family doctor can treat your depression as well as refer you to specialists, programs, and resources. Here are a few:

Fraser Health Crisis Line 604-951-8855
1-877-820-7444

Mood Disorders Association of BC
mdabc.net 604-873-0103
1-855-282-7979

Self-help and support groups and information on mood disorders.

Antidepressant Skills workbook

Download a free copy at
psychhealthandsafety.org/asw

B.C. Psychological Association
psychologists.bc.ca 1-800-730-0522
A public referral service to registered psychologists in B.C.

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www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Depression and Aging

For older adults and their families





“I just don’t feel like myself. I’m tired all the time and I don’t have much appetite. I’ve stopped meeting friends for lunch, and I’m becoming increasingly forgetful. What’s wrong with me?!” Doris Age 70

Everyone feels down from time-to-time. When these feelings start to interfere with your ability to function, you might be experiencing symptoms of depression.

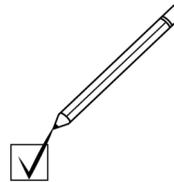
Depression affects your mood, your ability to think clearly, and your physical well-being.

Signs of Depression

Do you have any of the following?

- Depressed or irritable mood
- Little interest in activities and hobbies
- Change in appetite resulting in weight loss or gain
- Sleep problems, especially waking up in the morning
- Low energy or fatigue
- Low self-esteem
- Have a hard time concentrating
- Have trouble remembering things
- Feel hopeless
- Feel worthless
- Have a low mood in the morning, but feeling better as the day goes on

If you checked off 1 or more of these, you might want to talk with your doctor about checking to see if you are depressed.



Antidepressant Medicine

Your doctor might suggest you take antidepressants. These help to rebalance the neurochemicals in your brain that contribute to depression.

Things to know about antidepressants:

- Take antidepressants exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- The right amount of antidepressant takes 4 to 6 weeks to work.
- Always tell your doctor about any side effects or unwanted effects of the medicine. Your doctor can adjust your medicine to reduce the side effects and while keeping the effect of the drug.
- Antidepressants improve sleep, appetite, energy, concentration, and mood.
- To help prevent a relapse, it is best to continue taking your medication for at least 6 to 12 months **after** you feel better.