

Depression

Information for residents, families and carers



Depression is more than just a low mood. It is a common and serious illness.

People living with depression often have feelings of extreme sadness. Depression can make it hard for you to do everyday things.

Having depression is not a normal part of ageing and it can be treated.

Signs you may have depression

For more than two weeks:

You have felt sad, down or miserable most of the time, **or**

You are not interested in doing anything, **and**

You have some of these symptoms:

- You don't enjoy anything.
- You feel tired all the time and can't get going in the morning.
- You can't sleep or you sleep more than usual.
- You are not hungry.
- You are moody.
- You find it hard to make up your mind about normal, everyday things.
- You don't care about how you look.
- You don't want to see your family or friends.
- Your memory is worse than usual.
- You have suicidal thoughts.

Depression can be caused by

- Ongoing health problems
- Ongoing pain
- Loss of your independence and mobility
- Loss of family and friends
- Changing where you live (such as moving into residential aged care)
- Anniversaries of special days
- Stress
- Side-effects of some medications

- If you have had depression before, you are more at risk of getting it again. Let staff know what has helped you in the past.
- Dementia – depression is sometimes mistaken for dementia as they have many common symptoms. People with dementia can be assessed and treated for depression.

Ways to manage depression

Let staff know if you or your family notice unexplained sadness or depression.

Your doctor can work with you to decide if you need treatment. Your doctor or pharmacist can check your medicines to see if they may be contributing to your depression.

There are different types of treatment available:

- Exercise (for those who are able) can help mild depression.
- Psychological treatments (also called talking therapy) are common and effective.
- Your doctor may prescribe antidepressant medicine if you have moderate to severe depression.

Working together

You and your family are important members of the care team. You know what feels normal for you.

Let staff know if you are feeling sad all the time or notice any other signs of depression. Don't wait to see if you get better – it's always best to get help early.

Working together with staff can help to keep you healthy. Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

Questions to ask staff

- Could my sadness and moodiness be caused by depression?
- Could my medicines be contributing to my depression?



Want to know more?

'Depression and ageing' fact sheet <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

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