

Depression and Chronic Disease: Care Instructions



Overview

A chronic disease is one that you have for a long time. Some chronic diseases can be managed, but they usually cannot be cured. Depression is common in people with chronic diseases.

If you have depression, it's not your fault. Depression is a common mental health condition. And it may get better with treatment. Medicines, counseling, and self-care can all help.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Watch for symptoms of depression

The symptoms of depression are often subtle at first. You may think they are caused by your disease rather than depression. Or you may think it is normal to be depressed when you have a chronic disease.

If you are depressed you may:

- Feel sad or hopeless.
- Feel guilty or worthless.
- Not enjoy the things you used to enjoy.
- Feel hopeless, as though life is not worth living.
- Have trouble thinking or remembering.
- Have low energy, and you may not eat or sleep well.
- Pull away from others.
- Think often about death or killing yourself.

Get treatment

By treating your depression, you can feel more hopeful and have more energy. If you feel better, you may take better care of yourself, so your health may improve.

- Talk to your doctor if you have any changes in mood during treatment for your disease.
- Ask your doctor for help. Counseling, antidepressant medicine, or a combination of the two can help most people with depression. Often a combination works best. Counseling can also help you cope with having a chronic disease.

Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to **988lifeline.org** for more information or to chat online.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You feel like hurting yourself or someone else.
- Someone you know has depression and is about to attempt or is attempting suicide.

Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to **988lifeline.org** for more information or to chat online.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You hear voices.
- Someone you know has depression and:
 - Starts to give away possessions.
 - Uses illegal drugs or drinks alcohol heavily.
 - Talks or writes about death, including writing suicide notes or talking about guns, knives, or pills.

- Starts to spend a lot of time alone.
- Acts very aggressively or suddenly appears calm.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **A548** in the search box to learn more about "**Depression and Chronic Disease: Care Instructions**".

©2006-2023 Healthwise, Incorporated.

This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.