

Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior: Care Instructions

Overview

You have been seen by a doctor because you've had thoughts of suicide or have harmed yourself. Your doctor and support team want to help keep you safe. Your team may include a case manager, a social worker, and a counselor.

People often think about suicide because they feel hopeless, helpless, or worthless. These feelings may come from having a mental health problem, such as depression. These problems can be treated.

It's important to remember that there are people who care about you. Your doctor and support team take your pain very seriously, and they want to help. Treatment and close follow-up care can help you feel better.

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?

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.

Other things you can do

- Talk to someone. Be open about your feelings. Reach out to a trusted family member or friend, your doctor, or a counselor.
- Attend all counseling sessions recommended by your doctor.
- Make a suicide safety plan. This is a set of steps you can take when you feel suicidal. It includes your warning signs, coping strategies, and people you can ask for support. It's best to work with a therapist to make your plan.
- Ask someone to remove and store any guns, pills, or other means of suicide.
- Avoid alcohol and drug use.
- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

When should you call for help?



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

- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.

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Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have one or more warning signs of suicide. For example, call if:
 - You feel like giving away your possessions.
 - You use illegal drugs or drink alcohol heavily.
 - You talk or write about death. This may include writing suicide notes and talking about guns, knives, or pills.
 - You start to spend a lot of time alone or spend more time alone than usual.
- You hear voices.
- You start acting in an aggressive way that's not normal for you.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

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

Enter **G672** in the search box to learn more about "**Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior: Care Instructions**".

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