

Facts about Depression in Teens

Depression is more than sadness.

Depression is an illness with a biological basis. People who are depressed feel “down in the dumps” and are not interested in the activities they usually enjoy. Other symptoms that a depressed teen may experience include:

- feeling more irritable or angry than usual
- losing or gaining a significant amount of weight (not due to diet) or dramatic change in appetite
- having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- physical feelings of either restlessness or being slow, sluggish
- not having any energy
- feeling worthless or guilty (with no clear cause)
- not being able to concentrate or make decisions
- thinking about wanting to end your life

If you experience **at least five** of these symptoms most of the day for **at least two weeks**, you may be depressed.

*Talk to your parent(s), a trusted adult, or your doctor **immediately** — don't wait!!*

Depression is complex.

There are a number of factors that determine whether or not an individual will become depressed. Genetics, or whether there is a history of the illness in your family, play a part. A major negative or stressful life event, such as being abused; having trouble at home or at school; trouble with friends or in relationships; legal problems; a break-up or parents' divorce may also trigger an episode of depression. However, changes within the brain that lead to depression may occur even without an obvious cause.

When you are depressed, depression may affect many aspects of your life.

Your ability to do well in school, to enjoy hanging out with friends, and to play sports and engage in extracurricular activities can all be negatively affected when you are depressed.

If you are depressed, you are not alone.

In any given year, depression will affect 8 to 12 percent of teenagers in the United States.

Depression is treatable.

Studies show that more than 80 percent of people with depression can be successfully treated. Effective treatments for depression include medication, psychotherapy (talk therapy) or a combination of the two.

Depression does not go away on its own.

If you are depressed, it is important to begin treatment as soon as possible. Most people who are depressed begin to feel better after a few months of psychotherapy and/or taking medication.

Depression Resource List for Teens

More than Sad: Teen Depression (AFSP film website)

Access to information on recognition and treatment of depression; fact sheet and resource list for teens.

www.morethansad.org

Mental Health America (MHA)

Mental Health America (MHA) is the leading advocacy organization addressing the full spectrum of mental and substance use conditions and their effects nationwide. Website provides information on how to recognize symptoms of depression, how you can help yourself or a friend, types of treatment and warning signs of suicide.

www.mentalhealthamerica.net → Health Info → Mental Health Info → Search by Issue → Depression → Depression in Teens

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots organization for people with mental illness and their families. Website hosts a discussion group for teens who have been diagnosed with a mental illness, like depression, and want to connect with other teens who can relate to what they're going through.

www.nami.org → Find Support → Child & Teen Support → Discussion Groups → Teen Consumers

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading patient-directed national organization focusing on the most prevalent mental illnesses. Link to a brochure available in HTML or PDF format that helps you figure out the differences between a sad mood and depression. Also provides a workbook that you can fill in to help you better understand how to manage your depression and track your progress throughout treatment.

www.dbsalliance.org → Learn about mood disorders → Publications → Brochures → "Is It Just a Mood...or Something Else? Mood Disorders for Young People"

www.dbsalliance.org → Empower Yourself → Wellness Toolbox
→ Wellness Workbook

HealthyMinds.org (a part of the American Psychiatric Association)

The American Psychiatric Association the largest and longest-serving psychiatric medical association. APA advocates for psychiatrists and patients, and acts as a resource for mental health information and news.

www.healthyminds.org → Let's Talk Facts brochures → Depression

APA Help Center (a part of the American Psychological Association)

The American Psychological Association (APA) is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. Website offers a checklist of signs that you may be becoming depressed.

www.apahelpcenter.org → Featured Topics → “Change Your Mind About Mental Health” → Triggers & Signs

HelpGuide.org

HelpGuide is a free, non-commercial resource for people in need. Website contains information on symptoms, how to help a depressed friend, and how to talk to your parents about depression. Also includes links to other helpful resources.
www.helpguide.org → Depression → Teenagers (For Teens)

KidsHealth.org

KidsHealth is an award-winning website produced by the Nemours Foundation, one of the largest nonprofit organizations devoted to children's health. Website is a good source of understandable, accurate explanations of the factors that contribute to depression.

www.kidshealth.org → Teens Site → Your Mind → Mental Health → Depression

Note: Many of these sites also contain information on teen depression for your parents.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis. You will be routed to the closest possible crisis center in your area. Your call is free and confidential. Even if you are not in a

suicidal crisis, you can call the Lifeline if you just need to talk to someone who cares, are concerned about a friend, or need a referral to a mental health professional in your area.

English Lifeline Number: 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Spanish Language Lifeline Number/Para obtener asistencia en español durante las 24 horas, llame al: 1 (888) 628-9454

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

For information in Spanish/Para información en español:

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Spanish/Default.aspx