

Signs and symptoms of depression

Everyone feels down sometimes and feeling sad after certain life events is completely normal. For example, sadness after a relationship breakdown or losing a job is to be expected. These feelings hurt, but they also heal with time.

Depression is more than just feeling sad or low. Depression is a serious condition that affects your physical and mental health, and left untreated, it can be difficult to function in your business and at home.

What is a depressive disorder?

Someone might have a depressive disorder if:

- feelings of sadness and low mood may last for long periods of times without getting any better
- the feelings can be intense and make getting on with everyday life difficult, such as going to work or maintaining relationships
- sometimes there is no obvious reason to feel low.

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People with depression might experience symptoms that affects how they feel, think and behave such as:

- feeling sad, empty, irritable
- low levels of energy and loss of motivation
- having a hard time concentrating, making decisions or remembering things
- changes in behaviour such as withdrawing from family and friends, avoiding situations or places and using more alcohol and other drugs
- physical changes, for example weight gain or loss, aches and pains, feeling tired most of the time.

It's important to remember that anyone can experience some of these symptoms and it might not always mean it is depression. If any of these signs and symptoms last for more than two weeks, it's recommended to reach out and see a GP.

Causes of depression

Depression does not have a single cause. There are a range of biological, psychological and social factors that are linked to the development of depression, such as:

- family history of depression
- long term or serious physical illness
- personality – especially people who are anxious, worry a lot and have low self-esteem

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- experiencing ongoing difficulties such as unemployment, living in an abusive relationship or even experience a more recent adverse event such as the loss of a loved one or going through a divorce
- drug and alcohol use, can both lead and be a result from depression

For more information about treatment for anxiety and depression, check out the **Treatments for anxiety and depression Information Sheet**.

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

