

REAL

LEARNING ABOUT DEPRESSION

Do you feel very tired, helpless and hopeless? Are you sad most of the time and take no pleasure in your family, friends, or hobbies? Are you having trouble working, sleeping, eating and functioning? Depression is an illness, not a weakness. Learn more.

What is Depression?

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but these feelings usually pass after a few days. When you have depression, you have trouble with daily life for weeks at a time. Depression is not a feeling you can “snap out” of. It is a real illness that needs treatment.

What Causes Depression?

Several factors, or a combination of factors, may contribute to depression. People with a family history of depression may be more likely to develop it than those whose families do not have the illness. People with depression have different brain chemistry than those without the illness. Stress, such as the loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship, or any stressful situation may trigger depression.

What Are the Signs of Depression?

Different people have different symptoms. Some symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad, “empty,” feeling hopeless, tired, irritable, anxious, or guilty
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or not wanting to eat at all
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems.

Does Depression Look the Same for Everyone?

No. Depression affects different people in different ways. Women experience depression more often than men. Biological, life cycle and hormonal factors that are unique to women may be linked to women’s higher depression rate. Women with depression typically have symptoms of sadness, worthlessness and guilt.



1 of 5 Americans will face a mental health crisis in their lifetimes. Depression and other mental illnesses strike people of all ages, races and education and income levels.

Men with depression are more likely to be very tired, irritable and sometimes even angry. They may lose interest in work or activities they once enjoyed and have sleep problems.

Older adults with depression may have less obvious symptoms, or they may be less likely to admit to feelings of sadness or grief. They also are more likely to have medical conditions like heart disease or stroke, which may cause or contribute to depression. Certain medications also can have side effects that contribute to depression.

Children with depression may pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent, or worry that a parent may die. Older children or teens may get into trouble at school and be irritable. Because these signs can also be part of normal mood swings associated with certain childhood stages, it may be difficult to accurately diagnose a young person with depression.

How is Depression Treated?

The first step to getting the right treatment is to visit a doctor or mental health professional. She can do an exam or lab tests to rule out other conditions that may have the same symptoms as depression and determine whether certain medications you are taking may be affecting your mood.

The doctor should get a complete history of symptoms, including when they started, how long they have lasted and how bad they are. She should also know whether they have occurred before, and if so, how they were treated and whether there is a history of depression in your family.

Medications called antidepressants can work well to treat depression. They can take several weeks to work and some may cause side effects. You should talk to your doctor about whether medication is right for you.

Psychotherapy can also help treat depression by teaching new ways of thinking and behaving and changing habits that may be contributing to the depression. Therapy can help you understand and work through difficult relationships or situations that may be causing your depression or making it worse.

The bottom line is that there *IS* help in your community. But you have to reach out and ask for help.

How Can I Help Someone that has Depression?

If you know someone who has depression, first help him or her see a doctor or mental health professional.

- Offer support, understanding, patience and encouragement.
- Talk to him or her and listen carefully.
- Never ignore comments about suicide. Report them to your loved one's therapist or doctor.
- Invite him or her out for walks and other activities.
- Remind him or her that with time and treatment, the depression will lift

How Can I Help Myself if I am Depressed?

If you know someone who has depression, first help him or her see a doctor or mental health professional. If you or someone you know is in crisis, get help quickly. In

East Texas, Burke has a **24-Hour Crisis hotline:**

1-800-392-8343.

As you continue treatment, gradually you will start to feel better. Remember that if you are taking an antidepressant, it may take several weeks for it to start working. Try to do things that you used to enjoy before you had depression. Go easy on yourself.

If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your family doctor. You can also check the phone book for mental health professionals. Hospital doctors can help in an emergency.



Get Help. Get Real.

If you are struggling with depression or another mental illness, you're not alone. There are professionals and other resources here in East Texas that can help.

BURKE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

24 Hour Crisis Hotline

1-800-392-8343

Information and Appointments

936 634-5010

Burke's REAL Mental Health Site

www.myburke.org/REAL