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# DEPRESSION

## What is depression?

Depression is a low mood that affects everyday life and usually lasts for at least two weeks. In mild depression, some people are able to maintain their normal life, but struggle with feeling very low and often experience other symptoms. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can cause suicidal feelings.

If someone is given a diagnosis of depression, they might be told that they have mild, moderate or severe depression. This describes what sort of impact the symptoms are having on currently and what sort of treatment they are likely to be offered. A person might move between mild, moderate and severe depression during one episode of depression or across different episodes.

There are also some specific types of depression:

- **Prenatal depression** – depression that occurs during pregnancy, which is sometimes also called antenatal depression.
- **Postnatal depression (PND)** – depression that occurs in the first year (or so) after giving birth.
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)** – depression that occurs at a particular time of year, or during a particular season.
- **Dysthymia** – continuous mild depression that lasts for two years or more; it is also called chronic depression or persistent depressive disorder.

### How someone might feel

- finding no pleasure in life or things that are usually enjoyed
- down, upset or tearful
- no self-confidence or self-esteem
- restless, agitated or irritable
- guilty, worthless and down on oneself
- hopeless and despairing
- empty and numb
- isolated and unable to relate to other people
- a sense of unreality
- suicidal thoughts.

It's very common to experience depression and anxiety together. Some symptoms of depression can also be symptoms of anxiety, such as feeling restless, being agitated or struggling to sleep and eat.

### How someone might behave

- avoiding social events and activities that are usually enjoyed
- difficulty speaking, thinking clearly or making decisions
- feeling tired all the time
- difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- physical aches and pains with no obvious physical cause
- using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs more than usual
- self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- losing interest in sex
- difficulty remembering or concentrating on things
- no appetite and losing weight, or eating too much and gaining weight
- moving very slowly, or being restless and agitated