



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a medical illness that can have serious effects on physical and mental health. The symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad or anxious often or all the time
- Loss of interest in activities that used to enjoy
- Lack of energy
- Change in sleep habits
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Not being able to concentrate, remember details, or make decisions
- Feelings of guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

The exact cause of depression is unknown. Sometimes depression can occur without an obvious reason. A number of factors are linked to depression, including:

- Family history of depression
- Distressing situations like unemployment, relationship problems, isolation, or bereavement
- Having a medical problem, such as cancer, stroke, or chronic pain

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- Taking certain medications
- Using alcohol or drugs

TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

Treatment for depression can help reduce symptoms and shorten how long the depression lasts. Many helpful treatments for depression are available:

- **Psychotherapy.** Psychotherapy involves talking with a mental health professional on your thoughts, feelings, and issues that are happening in your life now. With therapy, you'll work with your therapist to learn skills to help you cope with life, change behaviors, and find solutions.
- **Medication.** Antidepressant medications can help improve your mood and coping skills by restoring and maintaining healthy levels of brain chemicals. When taking these medications, it is important to follow your doctor's prescription and instructions.

Many people use a combination of treatments to help manage depression.

HOW DOES TREATMENT OF MAJOR DEPRESSION WORK?

Treatment can include psychotherapy and/or medications to rebalance mind/brain structure so that symptoms of depression can be less overwhelming. Many studies have shown their effectiveness in controlling symptoms of depression and stopping symptoms from returning too.

WHAT DOES MY DOCTOR NEED TO KNOW WHEN PRESCRIBING ANTIDEPRESSANT?

- As much information as possible about your symptoms and medical history, including any illnesses in the past

- Any medicines and traditional or herbal remedies that you use
- If you are planning to have a baby or already pregnant or breastfeeding

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHEN TAKING ANTIDEPRESSANT?

- The US FDA indicates that depression and antidepressant medications are associated with risk of suicidality, so it's especially important to talk with your providers about coordinating a safety plan during the course of treatment.
- Consult your doctor immediately if your depression gets worse or you are thinking about hurting yourself.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF ANTIDEPRESSANT

Antidepressant medicines can cause a rare side effect called serotonin syndrome. These symptoms may include:

- Feeling confused
- Having hallucinations – sees, hears, feels, smells or tastes something that is not actually there
- Feeling restless or anxious
- Fast heart beat
- Changes in blood pressure
- Fever
- Feeling sick and vomiting
- Muscle stiffness or tremor
- Seizures or convulsions

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF EXPERIENCING SIDE EFFECTS

- Contact your doctor immediately when any side effect is noted.
- Keep a record of symptoms and any side effects and take it to your doctor's visits.

- Avoid or limit use of alcohol (wine, beer, and spirit intake), tobacco or other drugs.

SHOULD I SHARE MY MEDICATION WITH SOMEONE WHO IS DEPRESSED?

Never share your medicine with anyone else. Your medicine is prescribed to treat your symptoms and to suit your medical history. Your medicine may be harmful to others. If someone you know seems to have similar symptoms as you, encourage them to visit the doctor.

CAN I STOP TAKING MY MEDICINE WHEN FEELING WELL?

You should take your medicine as directed by your doctor. Do not change the amount of medicine that you take. You must talk to your doctor before you stop taking medicine. Suddenly stopping antidepressant medicines can cause severe illness.

GETTING HELP IN A CRISIS

If you or someone you know is having thoughts about hurting themselves or committing suicide, please seek immediate help.

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which provides 24-hour free, confidential help to people in crisis.
- Get help from your mental health provider, primary doctor, or other health care provider.
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader, or someone else in your faith community.

Source:

- New South Wales Government Health
- Transcultural Mental Health Center
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- US Food and Drug Administration

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甚麼是抑鬱症?

抑鬱症是一種精神疾病，會對身體和精神健康產生嚴重的影響。抑鬱症的症狀包括：

- 經常或一直感到悲傷或焦慮
- 對曾經享受的活動失去興趣
- 精神不振
- 睡眠習慣改變
- 胃口改變
- 性慾改變
- 無法集中注意力、記住細節或做出決定
- 感到內疚、無價值或無助
- 有自殺或傷害自己的想法

甚麼會導致抑鬱症?

導致抑鬱症的確切原因尚不清楚。有時抑鬱症可能會在沒有明顯原因的情況下發生。許多因素與抑鬱症有關，包括：

- 抑鬱症家族病史
- 令人苦惱的情況，如失業、人際關係問題、孤立，或喪親之痛等
- 有其它疾病，如癌症、中風或慢性疼痛等

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- 服用某些藥物
- 使用酒精或毒品

治療抑鬱症

抑鬱症的治療可以幫助減輕症狀，並縮短抑鬱症的持續時間。有許多有效的治療抑鬱症的方法：

• 心理療法

心理療法包括與心理健康專家討論您的想法、感受以及您現在生活中發生的問題。通過治療，您將與治療師一起學習技能以幫助您應對生活、改變行為並找到解決方法。

• 藥物

抗抑鬱藥物可以通過恢復和維持大腦化學物質的健康水平，來幫助改善您的情緒和應對技能。服用這些藥物時，請務必遵循醫生的處方和指示。

許多病人綜合各種療法來幫助控制抑鬱症。

如何治療大多數的抑鬱症?

治療方法包括心理療法及/或藥物治療，這些療法有助重新平衡心智/腦部結構，從而減輕抑鬱症的症狀。許多研究顯示這些療法在控制抑鬱症狀和阻止症狀復發都很有效。

我的醫生需要知道甚麼方可給我處方抗抑鬱藥物?

- 盡可能告訴醫生更多關於您的症狀和病歷的資料，以及您過去曾經有的任何疾病
- 您所服用的任何藥物及傳統或中草藥
- 如果您正在計劃生孩子或者已經懷孕或者母乳喂哺嬰兒

服用抗抑鬱藥物我還需要瞭解哪些相關資料?

- 美國食品及藥物監督管理局指出，抑鬱症和抗抑鬱藥與自殺風險有關，因此與您的醫護人員討論在治療過程中協調安全計劃尤為重要。
- 如果您的抑鬱症惡化或您正在考慮傷害自己，請立即諮詢您的醫生。

抗抑鬱藥可能會引起的副作用

抗抑鬱藥物可能會引致一種稱為5-羥色胺綜合症的罕見副作用。其症狀包括：

- 感覺迷惑
- 出現幻覺。會看到、聽到、感受到、聞到或品嚐到並非真實存在的事物
- 感到不安或焦慮
- 快速的心跳
- 血壓改變
- 發燒
- 感到噁心和嘔吐
- 肌肉僵硬或顫抖
- 抽搐或痙攣

若出現副作用，我應該怎做?

- 當發現任何副作用時，請立即聯繫您的醫生。
- 記錄您的病癥以及任何由服藥引致的副作用，並在見醫生時帶上這些記錄。
- 避免或限制使用酒精（紅酒、啤酒及烈酒），煙草或其他藥物。

我可以把我的藥物與有抑鬱症的人分享嗎?

切忌跟任何人分享您的藥物。您的藥物是根據您的症狀和符合您的病歷需求而處方的。您的藥物可能對其他人有害。若您有認識的人似乎有跟您相似的症狀，請鼓勵他們去看醫生。

當感覺良好時，我可以停止服藥嗎?

您應當根據醫生的指引服藥。不要更改服藥的份量。在停止服用藥物前，必須通知您的醫生。突然停用抗抑鬱藥物會引發嚴重疾病。

在危機中獲得幫助

如果您或您認識的人有傷害自己或自殺的想法，請立即尋求幫助。

- 撥打 1-800-273-TALK (8255) 到全國預防自殺生命專線，該專線為處於危機中的人們提供24小時免費、保密的幫助。
- 向您的心理健康提供者、主治醫生或其他醫療保健提供者尋求幫助。
- 聯繫親密的朋友或親人。
- 聯繫牧師、精神領袖或您的信仰團體中的其他人。

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