

# Symptoms of depression



## What this fact sheet covers:

- Distinguishing depression from an occasional 'down' mood
- Symptoms of depression
- When to seek help for depression
- Where to get more information

## Distinguishing depression from an occasional 'down' mood

Depression is a common experience, with one in seven Australians experiencing depression in their lifetime. We all face periods of feeling low and a bit depressed; experiences such as having a bad day at work or hearing some bad news can impact on our mood. Sometimes we might even feel sad for no reason at all.

In most cases, people 'bounce back'; however, people with clinical depression lack the ability to pick themselves up when feeling down. If symptoms of depression are severe, last for **two weeks** or more, and affect your functioning at home or at work, you should see a health professional.

## Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling bad about yourself
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Feeling overwhelmed by pessimism, anger, guilt, irritability and anxiety
- Varying emotions throughout the day – for example, feeling worse in the morning and

better as the day progresses

- Inability to enjoy life
- Reduced interested in sex
- Reduced pain tolerance
- Poor concentration and memory
- Low motivation to do things that used to matter to you
- Feeling exhausted

## When to seek help for depression

If symptoms of depression are severe, last for **two weeks** or more, and affect your functioning at home or at work, you may need to see a health professional. Having one or two symptoms by themselves is unlikely to indicate depression. However, there could be physical causes for your symptoms which may warrant medical assessment.

**If you are feeling suicidal, contact Lifeline's 24-hour crisis support service on 13 11 14 or seek immediate help** from a GP, psychiatrist or psychologist.



## Key points to remember

- Occasionally feeling depressed or down is a common experience.
- Professional healthcare advice should be sought if feelings of depression are severe, last for two weeks or more, and day-to-day functioning is impaired.
- **If you're feeling suicidal, seek immediate help** by calling one of the helplines below or speaking to your GP, psychologist or psychiatrist.

Helplines:

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

24-hour Australian crisis counselling service

**Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467**

[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

24-hour Australian counselling service

**beyondblue: 1300 22 4636**

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

24-hour phone support and online chat service and links to resources and apps

**Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800**

[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Free confidential 24-hour counselling for young people aged 5 to 18

**QLife (3pm - midnight): 1800 184 527**

[www.qlife.org.au](http://www.qlife.org.au)

National counselling and referral service for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex.

## Where to get more information

- **Depression resources**

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/depression](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/depression)

- depression self-test
- causes
- types
- treatments
- seeking help

- **Depression fact sheets**

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/about-us/publications-and-resources/fact-sheets](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/about-us/publications-and-resources/fact-sheets)

Find a range of fact sheets, including:

- antenatal and postnatal depression
- depression in adolescents and young people
- depression in older people
- managing depression with exercise
- e-mental health and depression

## Contact us

Email: [blackdog@blackdog.org.au](mailto:blackdog@blackdog.org.au)

Phone: (02) 9382 4530

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