

## Getting through depression

- Pace yourself. Don't expect to do everything you normally can. Set a realistic schedule.
- Don't believe all of your negative thinking such as blaming yourself, feeling hopeless or expecting to fail. This thinking is part of depression. These thoughts will go away as your depression lifts.
- If you can get involved in activities that make you feel good or make you feel like you've achieved something.
- Put off doing things that you find too difficult at the moment. Avoid making big life decisions during depression. If you must make a big decision, ask someone you trust to help you.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. Both make depression worse. Both can cause dangerous side effects or get in the way of letting your antidepressants work.
- Try not to get discouraged. It'll take time for your depression to lift fully. But treatment works for almost everyone.
- Exercise. It not only gives you a distraction but also seems to cause a chemical reaction in the body that may make your mood better. Do it as much as you can. Three times a week for 30 minutes to one hour each time is a good goal. But even less can be helpful.

## CU Healthy

**HCS** wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

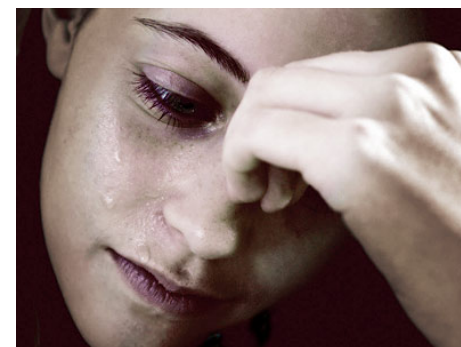
- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website ([carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health))
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or [cu\\_healthy@carleton.ca](mailto:cu_healthy@carleton.ca).



2600 CTTC Building  
613-520-6674  
[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)

# Depression



613-520-6674

[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)

2600 CTTC Building

## What is depression?

When doctors talk about depression, they usually mean *major* depression. Someone with major depression has symptoms like those listed in the box to the right nearly every day, all day, for two weeks or longer. If you're depressed, you may also have headaches, other aches and pains, stomach or bowel problems and problems with sex or lack of desire for sex.

An older adult with depression may feel confused or have trouble grasping simple requests. Older adults are also more likely to feel tired, weak or anxious, and to have trouble sleeping.

## What causes depression?

Depression seems to be related to a number of things. It has been connected with chemical imbalances in the brain that make it hard for the cells to communicate with one another.

Depression also seems to be genetic, though it doesn't happen to everyone who has it in their family. Depression can be linked to events in your life, such as the death of someone you love, a divorce or job loss. Taking certain medicines, abusing drugs or alcohol, or having other illnesses or diseases can also lead to depression.

Depression *isn't* caused by personal weakness, laziness or lack of willpower. It's a medical illness that can be treated.

### Symptoms of depression

- No interest or pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling sad or empty
- Crying easily or crying for no reason at all
- Feeling slowed down or feeling restless and unable to sit still
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Change in appetite, leading to weight gain or loss
- Thinking about death or suicide
- Trouble thinking, recalling things or focusing on what you're doing
- Trouble making everyday decisions
- Problems sleeping, especially in the early morning, or wanting to sleep all of the time or "hide under the covers"
- Feeling tired all of the time
- Feeling numb emotionally, perhaps even to the point of not being able to cry



## How is depression diagnosed?

If you're having symptoms of depression, be sure to tell your doctor. This is the only way to make sure you get the help you need to get you out of the depression. Don't expect your doctor to be able to guess that you're depressed just by looking at you. The longer you have the depression before you seek treatment, the harder it can be to treat.

Once you tell your doctor how you're feeling, he or she may ask you some questions about your symptoms, about your health, and about your family history of medical and mental disorders. Your doctor may also give you a physical exam and do some basic tests.