



When your feelings keep you from doing the things you love

Many people feel sad, worried, or lonely at some time in their lives. When these feelings keep you from doing things you once enjoyed, talk to your healthcare provider. It may be clinical depression and treatment options such as counseling or medication can help.



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Have you thought of hurting yourself, or do you feel that it's not worth it to go on?

Please seek immediate help. The following resources can assist you:

- **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** to reach a 24-hour crisis center or dial 911. 1-800-273-TALK is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. It provides free, confidential help to people in crisis.
- Go to the emergency room.
- Contact a mental health professional.
- Get help from your primary doctor or other healthcare provider.
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader, or someone else in your faith community.

**For more information:
AlosaHealth.org/Depression**

Is it depression?

Depression can be a serious medical illness that affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act. It is marked by persistent feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that you once enjoyed. It can contribute to a variety of distressing emotional, cognitive, and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function in the way you once did.

Depression is **not** a normal part of getting older, but it **can** be treated.

Think about your mood

Over the past two weeks have you:

- ✓ often been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?
- ✓ often been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things?

If you answered “yes” to either of these, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you might have depression and what can be done to address it.

**Get linked to treatment—
talk to your healthcare provider.**

Options for treating depression

Counseling

Talking to a licensed psychotherapist is one of the first line treatments for depression.

In some patients, such counseling may be as effective as taking a medication. Many kinds of professionals provide effective counseling, such as social workers, psychologists, and other mental health professionals.

Your healthcare provider can help you find the right person.



Prescription medication

Antidepressants are often prescribed for patients with moderate to severe depression symptoms.

These medications take at least 4-6 weeks to work but may take a bit longer in older patients. Medications called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)—citalopram (Celexa), sertraline (Zoloft), or escitalopram (Lexapro)—are frequently used as a first treatment.



Doses of medications may need to be increased after a few weeks of starting treatment. Common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, and headache. *Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about your medication.*



What can you do?

Here are some things you can do that may help with feelings of depression:

- ✓ **Get moving**—anything from a brief walk to a more strenuous activity can help.
- ✓ **Spend time outdoors.**
- ✓ **Schedule an event** with a friend, family member, or loved one.
- ✓ **Identify problems** that affect your mood and get help learning to cope with them or trying to fix them.
- ✓ **Join a group activity**, such as a program at a senior center or house of worship, take a fitness class, or look for a community volunteer opportunity.

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These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating physician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.

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