

## Depression

Sadness is a natural response to stressful events in life. Depression is an illness in which there is persistent sadness that one cannot snap out of. It affects 1 in 5 people.

### Common Signs and Symptoms

People who are depressed may also feel anxious or irritable. They lose interest in activities that were once pleasurable and find it hard to concentrate. They experience problems with sleep leaving them exhausted and fatigued. They lose their appetite leading to weight loss. Depressed people are swamped by feelings of excessive guilt and negative emotions, which they can't shake off.

There is no one cause of depression. It can be caused by multiple different factors.

### Family history

It can (not always) run in families. Multiple genes interacting in a special way possibly contribute to the illness.

### Changes in brain chemistry

Imbalance of chemicals in the brain, which act on the areas of the brain that control mood and thinking.

### Stressful life events

Adversities in life like financial problems, death of a loved one, relationship break down, social isolation, physical or sexual abuse and lack of a confiding relationship.

### Personality

People who have a low self-esteem are at higher risk of developing the illness

### Physical illnesses

Serious health problems like heart problems; stroke and cancer can cause depression

Diagnosis is made on the basis of intensity and duration of the symptoms. Depression can take a serious toll on physical health. The psychological stress can also lead to reduced ability of the body to fight infection.

Outlook is very promising. Nearly 80% of the people benefit from treatment and lead a fulfilling life.

### Organizations

The national depression campaign

Depression alliance

The fellowship of depressive anonymous

Sane line

The Self esteem advisory service