

Depression: What If I'm Not Getting Better?



Treatment can help you recover from depression. But your symptoms may not go away all at once. Because your depression may improve gradually over time, it may be hard to notice when your symptoms change.

It may take a combination of different treatments for you to get better, including medicines and counseling. If the first treatment you try does not work, do not give up. You and your doctor may decide to try different ones until you get better.

Many people try several medicines before finding the one that works best for them. You and your doctor may decide on a combination of medicines. If you do not feel better within the time your medicines are supposed to help, tell the doctor or counselor who is treating your depression.

Medicine

Antidepressants often are used to treat depression. You may begin to feel better within 1 to 3 weeks after starting antidepressants. It can take as many as 6 to 8 weeks to see more improvement. If you have problems with or

concerns about your medicines, or if you do not notice any improvement within 3 weeks, talk to your doctor.

After you start feeling better, your doctor probably will want you to stay on your medicine for at least 6 to 12 months. This may help keep your depression from coming back.

Take your medicine exactly as your doctor says. Be sure you understand how much medicine you need to take and how often you should take it. If you take your medicine differently than your doctor told you to take it, your depression may come back or get worse.

Stopping antidepressants can cause side effects and may cause your depression to come back or get worse. If you plan to stop taking your medicine, talk with your doctor first about how to do it safely.

The main reason people stop taking their medicines is because of side effects. Many side effects will go away over time. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about your side effects.

Combining medicine with counseling may work better than getting either one of these treatments alone.

Other treatments

In addition to medicine and counseling, you can do these things in your daily life to help your depression.

- **Get support from loved ones.** Tell your family and friends how you feel. Talking with others may help you feel better.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** Using alcohol and drugs can cause problems in your life and may make your depression worse.
- **Get regular exercise.** Exercise can help you feel better emotionally.

- **Get good sleep.** Lack of sleep can lead to stress and health problems. Talk to your doctor if you are having problems sleeping.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** A healthy diet is important for your overall health and well-being.
- **Stay involved in activities you enjoy.** Doing things you enjoy can help get your mind off things that cause stress.
- **Get treatment for other health problems you have.** Tell your doctor about any medical conditions you have besides depression.

Signs that depression is getting worse

Call your doctor right away if:

- You have any new symptoms or a change in your symptoms.
- You feel sad or hopeless.
- You begin avoiding other people.
- You lose interest in daily activities.

When to call 911

Call 911 or go to the hospital right away if:

- You think you cannot keep from harming yourself or others.
- You have thoughts about suicide.
- You hear voices.