

Depression: Who Can Treat You?



Treatment for depression is not "one size fits all." People have different needs and respond in their own way to the many treatments available. One or more people may guide your treatment with medicine, counseling, or both. You may see a family doctor, psychiatrist, or a psychologist. Talk to your doctor about a treatment team that works best for you. You need to feel comfortable with anyone who treats you.

Who can prescribe medicine?

- A **family medicine doctor** provides complete health care for individuals and families, including checkups and treatment.
- An **internist** treats adults. An internist may be your main doctor for checkups and for treating illness.
- A **psychiatrist** treats illnesses such as depression and can give counseling.

- A **physician assistant** works closely with doctors and gives routine health care.
- A **nurse practitioner** is a registered nurse who has advanced training. He or she gives routine health care.

Who can do counseling?

- A **psychiatrist** can also prescribe medicine.
- A **psychologist** is trained in human behavior and mental health.
- A **social worker** can help you with daily living, relationships, and family problems.
- A **licensed mental health counselor** can give counseling to individuals, couples, families, teens, and children.
- A **psychiatric nurse** is a registered nurse who provides education, treatment, and counseling.

Will you need to see a specialist?

Your doctor may want you to see a specialist, such as a psychiatrist. You may need a specialist if:

- You take medicines for other health problems. A specialist can manage all of your medications safely.
- You are not getting better with your current treatment.
- You have other mental health conditions along with depression.
- You get depressed while pregnant.
- You are pregnant and are taking antidepressants.

