

Common issues associated with depression

Depression can co-exist with other behavioral health issues, such as anxiety, substance abuse or eating disorders. You can better manage your depression and your overall health if you are aware of these issues and their relation to depression.

Some of the signs and symptoms associated with major depressive disorder such as problems with sleep, appetite, mood, concentration, enjoyment, energy, interest, libido, inappropriate guilt and thoughts of suicide.

Common problems associated with depression include:

- **Anxiety:** Anxiety may be associated with depression or it may have another cause. You may feel nervous, fearful or consumed with worry or dread. It's different from a specific stress that is preceded by an event and subsides afterward. It may appear for no apparent reason. Anxiety can interfere with your ability to concentrate and to manage your day-to-day responsibilities.
- **Substance abuse:** Repeatedly using alcohol or other drugs can interfere with your ability to perform your daily responsibilities and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. You may think that the alcohol or drugs improve your depression. But, in actuality, continued use of drugs or alcohol can make your depression worse. The combination of antidepressant medication and alcohol or drug

abuse can be dangerous. To fully understand your symptoms and receive an accurate diagnosis, you will need to stop any alcohol or drug use.

- **Disturbances in eating:** Appetite disturbances, such as eating poorly or overeating can occur with depression and anxiety. If you are deliberately restricting food, bingeing or purging, you may have an eating disorder. A disturbance in your dietary habits can cause deficiencies of certain nutrients and lead to complications that have been associated with depression. Poor eating habits can be affected by being dissatisfied with your body image, and that may contribute to depression, as well.

It is very important to be open and honest with your health care professional because your diagnosis and treatment are dependent on the information that you provide. Once you receive diagnosis and a treatment plan, it is important to maintain contact with your health care practitioner and to keep all scheduled appointments.



When talking with your health care professional, be prepared to share:

- Your mental and physical symptoms regarding sleep, appetite, mood, concentration, enjoyment, energy, interest, libido, inappropriate guilt, thoughts of suicide, irritability, agitation, panic, intrusive/unpleasant thoughts, uncontrollable alcohol or drug cravings and use, excessive dieting, preoccupation with food or guilt after eating.
- When your symptoms started and how often they occur.
- All physical symptoms (even though they may not seem related to your depression), such as pain, headaches, or digestive problems, for example.
- Recent changes in your life, good or bad. For example, a job change, new baby, death in the family, or divorce.
- All drugs you use, including prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements.
- Your family's health history.

References:

1. *American Psychiatric Association. Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Eating Disorders, Third Edition, May 2006.*
2. *American Psychiatric Association. Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Major Depressive Disorder, Third Edition, November, 2010.*
3. *American Psychiatric Association. Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Substance Use Disorders, Second Edition, August, 2006.*
4. *Susman, JL., Keller, MB.*

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