

A focus on Recognizing Depression in Adults

Depression is more than feeling sad or “blue.” It is a disease that affects over 19 million Americans every year (almost 10% of the adult population).

Depression can take different forms in different people, but it always causes suffering and decreases the person’s quality of life. The good news is that there are several effective ways to treat depression, so recognizing it is important.

How to recognize depression

Depression lasts at least two weeks and may make the person feel:

- Sad, hopeless, or empty all of the time
- Worthless or guilty
- Restless or sluggish

People with depression may:

- Lose interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Sleep too much, or not enough
- Lack energy
- Gain or lose weight when they don’t want to
- Have trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Think about death or suicide

Risk factors

Anyone can suffer from depression. It can be triggered by devastating experiences, such as loss of a family member, loss of work, or homelessness.

Relatives of people who have a history of depression or substance abuse have a higher risk of depression, as do people who use alcohol or drugs heavily.

What to do

Depression takes many forms, and it’s impossible to diagnose just by looking at a person. If you think someone is suffering from depression, recommend a discussion with a health care provider. The important thing to remember is that depression can be treated.

For more information about depression, ask your health specialist, or visit any of these informative Web sites:

- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
- Mental Health America: www.nmha.org
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: www.dbsalliance.org

Which person is depressed?



You can't tell just by looking.



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