

Symptoms of Depression in Men



While everyone feels sad at times, many times the feeling will pass within a few days. When these feelings persist for at least two weeks, a person may be suffering from depression. And, while people often think of sadness as a sign of depression, being irritable or very tired also may be symptoms of depression, especially in men.

What is depression?

Depression is a common but serious condition that affects how a person thinks and feels. Some causes of depression include genetics, chemical imbalances, trauma, stress and drug or alcohol abuse. At times, depression can happen without a specific cause. Depression, especially later in life, can occur along with a chronic medical condition such as diabetes or heart disease.

Symptoms of depression

Symptoms of depression can range from mild to severe, and while depression varies from person to person, men may experience symptoms differently than women.

Classic symptoms of depression may include:

- Feeling sad or “empty”
- Not being able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Not being able to eat, having no appetite or overeating
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious, angry or guilty
- Loss of interest in work, family or once pleasurable activities, including sex
- Feeling very tired
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details
- Aches, pains, headaches or digestive problems
- Inability to meet responsibilities at home or work
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts*

While some symptoms of depression can be the same for both men and women, men may be more likely to:

- ▶ Feel much more irritable, angry or short tempered than usual
- ▶ Feel physical pain (back pain, headaches, digestive issues)
- ▶ Find it difficult to concentrate or be productive at work
- ▶ Have difficulty sleeping
- ▶ Deny or hide the depression symptoms
- ▶ Be reluctant to talk about their feelings
- ▶ Focus on the physical aspects of depression (headache, back pain, sleep problems) as opposed to the underlying condition
- ▶ Use alcohol, TV, sports and/or sex to “medicate” themselves

Although women with depression are more likely to attempt suicide, men are more likely to die by suicide.

Getting help

Depression is a serious medical illness and not a sign of emotional weakness. But, for some men, it may be difficult to open up about how they are feeling. It is often a wife, significant other, coworker or close friend who first recognizes the symptoms of depression in men. With the right treatment, most men can get better and overcome the physical and emotional symptoms of depression.

If you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of depression, it is important to begin with a visit to a primary care doctor to look for any medical reasons behind the depression.

Realize that once diagnosed, it can take time to find the right treatment, and it can take time for the right treatment to work. Also, remember that treating depression involves more than medication alone. Talk therapy may be effective either alone or combined with medication. Exercise, healthy eating and social support from trusted friends and family members are also important.

If you suspect that you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of depression, call for an appointment with your primary care provider and talk with your Care Management nurse.

HELP

*** If you or someone you know is thinking about hurting themselves or others, seek help right away. To reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, call 800-273-8255. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 – or go to the closest emergency room.**

