

Facts about Depression in Teens

Depression is more than sadness.

Depression is an illness with a biological basis. People who are depressed feel “down in the dumps” and are not interested in the activities they usually enjoy. Other symptoms that a depressed teen may experience include:

- feeling more irritable or angry than usual
- losing or gaining a significant amount of weight (not due to diet) or dramatic change in appetite
- having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- physical feelings of either restlessness or being slow, sluggish
- not having any energy
- feeling worthless or guilty (with no clear cause)
- not being able to concentrate or make decisions
- thinking about wanting to end your life

If you experience **at least five** of these symptoms most of the day for **at least two weeks**, you may be depressed. ***Talk to your parent(s), a trusted adult, or your doctor immediately – don’t wait!!***

Depression is complex.

There are a number of factors that determine whether or not an individual will become depressed. Genetics, or whether there is a history of the illness in your family, play a part. A major negative or stressful life event, such as being abused; having trouble at home or at school; trouble with friends or in relationships; legal problems; a break-up or parents’ divorce may also trigger an episode of depression. However, changes within the brain that lead to depression may occur even without an obvious cause.

When you are depressed, depression may affect many aspects of your life.

Your ability to do well in school, to enjoy hanging out with friends, and to play sports and engage in extracurricular activities can all be negatively affected when you are depressed.

If you are depressed, you are not alone.

In any given year, depression will affect 8 to 12 percent of teenagers in the United States.

Depression is treatable.

Studies show that more than 80 percent of people with depression can be successfully treated. Effective treatments for depression include medication, psychotherapy (talk therapy) or a combination of the two.

Depression does not go away on its own.

If you are depressed, it is important to begin treatment as soon as possible. Most people who are depressed begin to feel better after a few months of psychotherapy and/or taking medication.