

# Depression



## What is the cause of depression?

There is no single cause of major depression. Psychological, biological, and environmental factors may all contribute to its development. Whatever the specific causes of depression, scientific research has firmly established that major depression is a biological brain disorder.

Scientists have also found evidence of a genetic predisposition to major depression. There is an increased risk for developing depression when there is family history of the illness.

Life events, such as the death of a loved one, a major loss or change, chronic stress, and alcohol and drug abuse, may trigger episodes of depression. Also, illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and some medications may trigger depressive episodes.

## Symptoms of depression include:

- Persistently sad or irritable mood
- Pronounced changes in sleep, appetite, and energy
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, and remembering
- Physical slowing or agitation
- Lack of interest in or pleasure from activities that were once enjoyed
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, and emptiness
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

## How is major depression treated?

80% and 90% of those suffering from serious depression can be effectively treated and returned to their normal daily activities and feelings.

There are 2 basic types of treatment for depression:

1. Medications
2. Psychotherapy

