



## What does depression feel like?

Depression is far more common in teens than you may think. You are not alone and your depression is not a hopeless case. Even though it can feel like depression will never lift, it eventually will—and with proper treatment and healthy choices, that day can come even sooner.

## Signs and symptoms of teen depression

- You constantly feel irritable, sad, or angry.
- Nothing seems fun anymore, and you just don't see the point of trying.
- You feel bad about yourself—worthless, guilty, or just "wrong" in some way
- You sleep too much or not enough.
- You have frequent, unexplained headaches, stomach pains or other physical problems.
- Wanting to be alone most of the time.
- Anything and everything makes you cry.
- You've gained or lost weight without consciously trying to.
- You just can't concentrate. Your grades may be plummeting because of it.
- You feel helpless and hopeless.
- Losing interest in schools, sports, activities. No longer enjoying favorite activities.
- Withdrawing from friends and family.

## What you can do to feel better: Tips for Depressed Teens

Depression is not your fault, and you didn't do anything to cause it. However, you do have some control over feeling better. Staying connected to friends and family, making healthy lifestyle decisions, and keeping stress under control can all have a hugely positive impact on your mood. In the meantime, you might need therapy or medication to help you while you sort out your feelings. Look into your treatment options with your parents. **TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT AND ASK FOR HELP!!**

**Try not to isolate yourself:** When you're depressed, you may not feel like seeing anybody or doing anything. Just getting out of bed in the morning can be difficult, but isolating yourself only makes depression worse. Spend time with friends, especially those who are active, upbeat, and make you feel good about yourself. Avoid hanging out with those who abuse drugs or alcohol, get you into trouble, or who make you feel insecure.

**Keep your body healthy:** Making healthy lifestyle choices can do wonders for your mood. Things like diet and exercise have been shown to help depression. As for food, an improper diet can make you feel sluggish and tired, which worsens depression symptoms. Your body needs vitamins and minerals such as iron and B-vitamins. Make sure you're feeding your mind with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

**Avoid alcohol and drugs:** You may be tempted to drink or use drugs in an effort to escape from your feelings and get a "mood boost," even if just for a short time. However, substance use can not only make depression worse, but can cause you to become depressed in the first place. In short, drinking and taking drugs will make you feel worse—not better—in the long run.

**Ask for help if you're stressed:** Stress and worry can take a big toll, even leading to depression. If you're dealing with relationship, friendship, or family problems, talk to an adult you trust. Your school may have a counselor you can go to for help, or you may want to ask your parents to make an appointment for you to see a therapist.

## Helping a depressed friend

- **Get your friend to talk to you.** Starting a conversation about depression can be daunting, but you can say something simple: "You seem like you are really down, and not yourself. I really want to help you. Is there anything I can do?"
- **Know that your friend doesn't expect you to have the answers.** Your friend probably just needs someone to listen and be supportive. By listening and responding in a non-judgmental and reassuring manner, you are helping in a major way.
- **Encourage your friend to get help.** Urge your depressed friend to talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor. It might be scary for your friend to admit to an authority figure that there is a problem. Having you there might help, so offer to go along for support.
- **Stick with your friend through the hard times.** Depression can make people do and say things that are hurtful or strange. But your friend is going through a very difficult time, so try not to take it personally. Once your friend gets help, he or she will go back to being the person you know and love. In the meantime, make sure you have other friends or family taking care of you. Your feelings are important and need to be respected, too.

## 10 Tips TO RELIEVE STRESS

1. Eat a healthy and balanced diet, try to avoid foods high in sugar and caffeine.
2. Get enough sleep, 6 to 8 hours every night.
3. Exercise! Engage in some type of physical activity, even if it's just a walk outside.
4. Turn off all electronics and RELAX! Get at least 15 minutes to yourself every day to just relax! Take a moment: Close your eyes, breathe deeply, think of something you love doing.
5. Use deep breathing techniques and positive thinking! Sit up straight. Relax your shoulders. Slowly breathe in through your nose like you are smelling a flower. Slowly exhale through your mouth like you are blowing out a candle. Try deep breathing when you wake up and before bed for a relaxing start and finish to your day.
6. Focus on your strengths! Try to think POSITIVE!
7. Do things that will make you happy! Things that you enjoy! Listen to music, play a sport, write, draw, sing, dance, play with your pet, hang out with friends, laugh, play a game, play an instrument.
8. Talk to someone! Get support!
9. Get out stress through talking, getting active or creative.
10. Try to find a solution to your stress: Identify the problem, Brainstorm solutions, Think about the pros and cons, Put your solution into action!!