

Clinical Depression

Clinical depression is a complex mood disorder caused by various factors, including genetic predisposition, personality, stress and brain chemistry. Treatments include psychoeducation, psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy and brain stimulation therapies (electroconvulsive therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation and magnetic seizure therapy).



Your mental health matters. Know when to seek help.

1 Signs and Symptoms

- is present most days and lasts most of the day
- lasts for more than two weeks
- impairs the person's performance at work, at school or in social relationships.
- changes in appetite, weight, sleep, more fatigue and irritability
- loss of interest in work, hobbies, people
- withdrawal from family members and friends

2 Signs and Symptoms

- feeling useless, hopeless, excessively guilty, pessimistic or having low self-esteem
- agitation or feeling slowed down
- trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- crying easily, or feeling like crying but being not able to
- thoughts of suicide (which should always be taken seriously)
- a loss of touch with reality, hearing voices (hallucinations) or having strange ideas (delusions).

3 CAUSE AND RISK FACTORS

There is no single cause of depression.

Potential triggers of depression include:

- genetic or family history of depression
- psychological or emotional vulnerability to depression
- biological factors such as imbalances in brain chemistry and in the endocrine/immune systems
- major stress in the person's life.

4 CAUSE AND RISK FACTORS

Depression and physical illness

Depressive symptoms may be:

- the result of another illness that shares the same symptoms (e.g., lupus, hypothyroidism)
- a reaction to another illness (e.g., cancer, heart attack)
- caused by neurological changes resulting from a physical illness (e.g., stroke).

5 TREATMENT

To establish whether a person is depressed, health care professionals ask questions such as whether they are feeling down or hopeless, or whether they have little interest or pleasure in doing things. In a follow-up assessment, you might be asked about:

- thoughts, feelings and behavior
- any history of mental health problems and what treatments were helpful in the past
- physical health problems
- family history of mental health problems
- your day-to-day life: relationships, work or school.

6 TREATMENT

The most commonly used treatments are:

- medications such as antidepressants
- psychoeducation
- psychotherapy
- brain stimulation therapies, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) and magnetic seizure therapy (MST).