



# Depression...

Depression isn't a sign of weakness, it's a chronic (long-term) condition that may require long-term management or treatment. It is different from feeling down or sad. Someone suffering from depression will experience intense emotions of anxiety, hopelessness, negativity and helplessness. Depression can happen to anyone – many successful and famous people battle with this problem.

## Signs of depression

These are the most common symptoms of depression. If you experience four or more of the symptoms listed below, for most of the day, every day for more than two weeks, you should seek help from your GP, or contact Atrium direct:

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Sadness that does not go away
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Difficulty concentrating
- Not being able to enjoy things that are usually pleasurable
- Feeling anxious all the time
- Avoiding other people, sometimes even your close friends
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Sleeping problems
- Very strong feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Finding it hard to function at work/college/school
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of sex drive and/or sexual problems
- Physical aches and pains
- Self-harm
- Thinking about suicide and death

## Types of depression

### Mild depression

Depression is described as mild when it has a negative but limited effect on your daily life, such as sleeping problems or lack of motivation.

### Major depression

Major depression hugely interferes with an individual's ability to cope with their daily life; with eating, sleeping and many other everyday activities. Some people may experience only one episode or several episodes in a lifetime.

### Post-natal depression

This is much more intense and lasts longer than the 'baby blues' which some new mothers feel. It can leave new mothers feeling inadequate, completely overwhelmed and unable to cope. They may have problems sleeping, panic attacks and may also experience negative feelings towards their child. It affects one in ten mothers and usually begins two to three weeks after the birth.

### Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

This is associated with the start of winter and can last until spring when longer days bring more daylight. When it is mild, it is sometimes called "winter blues". SAD can make sufferers feel anxious, stressed and depressed. It may interfere with their moods and with their sleeping and eating patterns.

### Bipolar (Manic) depression

The mood swings which define bipolar depression can be extreme. These range from highs – where the individual feels extremely elated and indestructible; to lows – where they may experience despair and lethargy.

# How to deal with depression

## Change your mindset

It is common to have feelings of worthlessness or guilt with depression. Try to be aware of any negative thoughts you have about yourself and how they might be affecting how you see yourself and how you feel. If you can, try to think about how realistic these thoughts are and how you might change them into something more positive (see Counselling below).

## Get out and socialise

If you feel depressed it can be difficult to be sociable. Feeling alone may make you feel worse, so it's important to keep in touch with friends and family. Having people around you or groups that you are involved with will help to reduce feelings of isolation.

## Work and Finances

Making sure that you do not feel overwhelmed by your work responsibilities is important because it gives you a sense of being in control. It is particularly important to spend quality time with friends and family if you are feeling depressed.

If you are having financial difficulties, speak to your local Citizens Advice Bureau about how you might get financial help. You can also ring the National Debtline on 0808 808 4000 which provides free, confidential and independent advice.

## Close relationships

If you are struggling to cope with a difficult relationship or your depression is causing problems in

your relationship you can contact Atrium direct about couples counselling or one-to-one therapy.

## Look after your body

Exercise can lift your mood because it can take your mind off your depression as well as stimulate the release of endorphins in the brain. Endorphins are chemicals that make you feel happier.

Meanwhile, alcohol acts as a depressant and if you drink too much or too often, you are more likely to become depressed. With such a vicious circle it is best to drink moderately, if at all. Recreational drugs should also be avoided.

## Medication

Medication will not always be the first choice, especially if your depression is mild. There are a number of medications available which work in different ways and will be prescribed by your GP depending on the type and severity of depression you have.

## Counselling (talking therapies)

Talking therapies work by exploring the underlying causes of your depression. They can help you work out what caused it in the first place, what keeps you feeling depressed and ways of making things better.

## Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive Therapy (sometimes called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or CBT) addresses the underlying causes of depression. It challenges the kinds of behaviour and thoughts which are causing you problems.

**For more help or information, visit your GP or contact:**

**Atrium Clinic and Therapy Centre**  
13 Weston Road, Southend  
01702 342 256  
[www.atriumclinic.co.uk](http://www.atriumclinic.co.uk)

**For more background reading:**

**Mental Health Foundation**  
020 780 31101  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

**All enquiries are dealt with compassionately, efficiently and in the strictest confidence.**

**A GP referral is not essential for self-funding patients**

**atrium**  
Clinic and Therapy Centre  
*Bringing back the brightness*