

WOMEN'S DEPRESSION

▼ What is depression?

Depression is an illness, in the same way that diabetes or heart disease are illnesses. Depression is an illness that affects the entire body, not just the mind.

- Depression is the leading cause of alcoholism, drug abuse and other addictions.
- Depression is an illness that can be successfully treated in more than 80% of the people who have it.
- Depression is an equal-opportunity illness—it affects all ages, all races, all economic groups and both genders.

▼ How do you know you are depressed instead of blue?

Major depression goes far beyond “feeling blue.” It’s characterized by one or more episodes, during which you will experience a persistent sad or empty mood and/or you have a lack of interest in all, or almost, all pleasurable activities. And, these symptoms occur all day nearly every day for at least two weeks.

▼ What else is do you need to know about depression?

- Depression is now determined to be the leading cause of “disease burden” (a composite measure including both illness and death) among women.
- Twice as many women as men experience depression. About one out of every four women develops depression during their lifetime.
- Numerous studies show that depression clearly has psychological, environmental and biological roots. There is no one cause for depression.
- Research indicates that the female hormonal system probably plays a major role in contributing to a higher incidence of depression in women.
- Suicide is a major public-health problem in the world. Suicide is the second major cause of death worldwide in women between the ages of 15 and 44.
- Fewer than half of women with depression seek treatment. While mental illness is very common, it is also stigmatized to the extent that women do not seek treatment for fear of reactions of their family and friends.
- What women do not know about diseases of the brain will harm or even kill them. They need to learn the signs and symptoms of the major mental illnesses, aggressively seek good care and expect that their doctors will be informed to take their condition seriously.

It is important to remember that depression is a treatable illness, not a character flaw.
SEEK TREATMENT!



For more information, contact the nearest community mental health center or the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services
P.O. Box 687, 1706 East Elm, Jefferson City, MO 65101
800-364-9687 or 573-751-5212 / dmh.mo.gov

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