

# Depression

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad. But these feelings are usually short-lived and pass within a couple of days. However, clinical depression is more than that. It is a serious condition that affects a person's mind and body. It impacts all aspects of everyday life including eating, sleeping, working, relationships, and how people think about themselves.

Depression is one of the most common conditions around the world. People who are clinically depressed cannot simply will themselves to feel better; they need to receive appropriate treatment or the condition may persist. Many people do not seek treatment for depression for a variety of reasons; including the belief that depression is a character flaw or a personal weakness.

There are many types of depression. Some types are caused by life events while others could be caused by chemical changes in the brain. Those types include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ **Major Depressive Disorder**  
This illness impairs a person's

ability to work, sleep, eat, and function as he or she normally would. It keeps people from enjoying activities that were once pleasurable, and causes them to think about themselves and the world in negative ways. Major depression is often disabling and may occur several times in a person's lifetime.

- ❖ **Dysthymic Disorder**

A milder yet more enduring type of major depression. People with dysthymia may appear to be chronically mildly depressed to the point that it seems to be a part of their personality. When people finally seek treatment for dysthymia, it is not uncommon that they have struggled with this condition for a number of years.

- ❖ **Bipolar Disorder**

Also known as manic-depression or manic-depressive disorder. This condition is characterized by mood that alternates between periods of depression and periods of elation and excitable behavior known as mania. The depressions can be severe and the mania can seriously impair one's normal judgment. When manic, a person is prone towards reckless and inappropriate behavior.

- ❖ **Postpartum Depression**

A rare form of depression occurring in women within approximately one week to six months after giving birth to a child. Many women with postpartum depression may experience great anxiety, panic attacks, spontaneous crying, difficulty sleeping, and a lack of interest in their new child.

- ❖ **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**

This condition affects people during specific times or seasons of the year. During the winter months individuals feel depressed and lethargic, but during other months their moods may be normal.

People who are depressed may experience feelings of anxiety, insomnia, fatigue or have suicidal thoughts. Some of the symptoms also include overeating or loss of interest in eating, in addition to having difficulty concentrating or making decisions. Depression puts a dark, gloomy cloud over how we see ourselves, the world, and our future. It is too serious to just will away or ignore; people need to seek treatment to overcome it.