



ideas to assist with life's challenges



Depression can be successfully treated when identified early. Know the signs and symptoms of depression.

A Guide to Depression

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is more than just feeling sad or a little under the weather. Depression is a mental illness that can seriously affect a person's feelings, thought patterns, behavior and quality of life. More than five percent, or 15 million Americans, suffer from depression. At least one in six people will suffer from a depressive illness at least once in their lifetime.

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Experts believe that there are many factors that cause depression. Chemical and nerve cell disturbances within the brain, sometimes genetically inherited, play an important role in depression. Other factors can include losing a relationship or a loved one, stressful life events, medical illness, drinking too much alcohol or abusing drugs. Depression has also been linked to changes in the seasons. This type of depression, which usually occurs in the fall, is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Researchers believe SAD may be caused by decreased sunlight as the days shorten.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION?

When three or more of the following symptoms persist for over 2 weeks, depression may be present:

- Ongoing sad, anxious or empty feelings
- A loss of interest in activities that normally is pleasurable, including sex
- Sleep problems (insomnia, early morning waking or oversleeping)
- Irritability
- A loss of energy and a sense of fatigue, or being slowed down
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and helplessness
- Difficulty in concentrating, remembering and making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts

GET HELP

If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms of depression, it is time to call the EAP or your physician. Early treatment is important to avoid more serious suffering.

For more information or free counseling call Intermountain EAP at 1.800.832.7733.

Visit our website at intermountainhealthcare.org/eap