



Depression

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What is depression?

Depression is more than a bad day or a rough patch. It's an unshakeable feeling of sadness and emptiness that lasts for weeks and months on end. Other symptoms may include an inability to experience fun, poor sleep, poor appetite, overeating, fatigue and poor concentration.

What is significant?

Depression is an illness that dramatically impairs your ability to function in society. Many

people who are depressed contemplate or actually attempt suicide. Others may turn to negative coping strategies such as emotional distance, anger, alcohol or drugs.



What else should I be aware of?

Being depressed greatly increases a person's likelihood of trying to take their own life. If you're feeling hopeless or fear a loved one may be contemplating suicide, call HealthLink at 403-943-LINK, the Alberta Mental Health Board Help Line toll-free at 1-877-303-2642, Crisis Line at 403-266-1605 (available 24/7) or Access Mental Health at 403-943-1500.

What can I do?

- ✓ Therapy can help you identify and change your distorted and negative thoughts, enabling you to gain perspective and to see things in a more positive light. Your doctor can refer you to a therapist.
- ✓ Look at your lifestyle and see what can be changed in your work situation, your family situation or your schedule. Take time for yourself to pursue your interests.

- ✓ Nurture healthy, supportive relationships. Talk regularly to your family and friends.
- ✓ Be realistic in setting goals and try to accomplish them one step at a time.
- ✓ Exercise is a great mood booster. Engage in physical activity 30-60 minutes daily.
- ✓ Nourish your body with healthy food choices based on Canada's Food Guide.
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol or do illegal drugs. Caffeine,

tobacco, excess sugar and fat can also tax the body's natural ability to manage stress. Keep a personal journal in which you can express your feelings.

- ✓ Contact the Canadian Mental Health Association at www.cmha.ca or 403-297-1700. The Alberta Mental Health Board (www.amhb.ab.ca) is another excellent resource.
- ✓ Learn more about depression at www.makinghealthhappen.com.

What can I take?

Clinical depression often requires treatment with some combination of therapy, anti-depressant medications, or both. If you've been prescribed medication, make sure you're taking it as directed and don't discontinue use without first talking to your doctor.



Go to MakingHealthHappen.com and enter **hw30709** in the search box to learn more about Depression.