

The Wellness Exchange

A Publication of



BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICESSM

Solutions for a Healthier WorkplaceSM

For more information call 1-800-765-3277 or visit www.bhsonline.com



What is Depression?



Depression is an illness, in the same way that diabetes or heart disease are illnesses. Depression is not something to be ashamed of, it does not mean you are weak or have a character flaw. Depression can affect the entire body, not just the mind. One in five people will suffer from some type of depression in their lifetime. Depression is an equal opportunity illness- it affects all ages, all races, and both genders. Depression is second only to heart disease in causing lost days at work in America.



How Depression Affects You

Depression changes your daily routine considerably, and not for the better. For example, you may not be keeping up with your everyday responsibilities (housework, laundry, dishes, paying your bills, getting to work on time or at all). You may be letting yourself go -- no exercise, wearing whatever you can find, less bathing or shaving, etc. You may not be laughing anymore and you may have stopped socializing. You may not be sleeping enough or sleeping too much. Your eating habits may have changed to not eating enough or eating too much. Your sexual desire may decrease or is nonexistent. Overall, your life may not be the same as it was.



How to Treat Depression

Treatment is available and has a high success rate if you're willing to do the work to get better. Psychotherapy (counseling) and medication are the two primary treatment approaches. Some people can get better with the help of a clinician alone and may not need medication (antidepressants). Other people need a combination of medication and therapy to help them feel better. Oftentimes the medication can make therapy more effective. It is very important that the prescription and management of medication be done by a responsible physician working closely with the patient and the therapist.

Impact of Depression

- Over 15 million American adults suffer from depressive illness in a given year
- Is a leading cause of suicide in the United States
- Causes pain and suffering not only to those who have the disorder, but also to those who care about them
- Depression can occur at any age
- Can weaken the immune system making you more susceptible to other illnesses
- Will be the second most common health problem by the year 2020.

<http://www.pbs.org/>

How does depression feel?

You may feel hopeless about your life, or nothing may seem exciting to you anymore. You may be crying a lot about things you normally wouldn't cry over, or over nothing at all. Getting up in the morning may be a struggle, or getting through your normal routine. People around you may irritate you for no reason; therefore, you may isolate yourself from others. You may be feeling anxious and worried most of the time. In severe cases, you may have recurring thoughts of death and/or suicidal impulses. You may experience an impending feeling of doom that something bad is going to happen, although you don't know what.

Who is at Risk?

1. Everyone is susceptible
2. Women-1 in 4 will experience depression
3. Men-1 in 10 will experience depression
4. Elderly-Often symptoms of depression in the elderly are mistaken for symptoms of other diseases, such as Dementia, or the normal aging process
5. Children-behavior can be a temporary "phase" or symptoms of depression

For more information on depression try the following sites:

- <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>
- <http://www.depression.com/>



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

For more information, contact us at 800-765-3277

Although October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month, being

aware of breast cancer issues is important year-round.

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast begin to grow out of control and invade nearby tissues or spread throughout the body. Large collections of this out-of-control tissue are called tumors. However, benign tumors are not cancerous because they cannot spread and are not life-threatening. The tumors that can spread throughout the body and/or invade nearby tissue are called malignant tumors, and are considered cancer.

While the majority of cases occur in women, men can also get breast cancer. Male breast cancer is not very common; for every 100 cases of breast cancer, less than 1 are in men. Signs of breast cancer and treatment for men are almost the same as for women.

Risk Factors:

According to the American Cancer Society research has found several risk factors that may increase your chances of getting breast cancer, including:

- ~ Personal history of breast cancer or some non-cancerous breast diseases.
- ~ Family history of breast cancer (mother, sister, daughter).
- ~ Being overweight.
- ~ Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy.
- ~ Using birth control pills.
- ~ Drinking alcohol (more than one drink a day).
- ~ Not getting regular exercise.
- ~ Getting older.
- ~ Starting your menstrual period at a very young age.
- ~ Starting menopause at a late age.

Having a risk factor does not mean you will get breast cancer. Most women have some risk factors and most women do not get breast cancer. If you have breast cancer risk factors, talk with your doctor about ways you can lower your risk and about screening for breast cancer.

There are ways you can help lower your risk of breast cancer:

- ~ Control your weight and get regular exercise.
- ~ Know your family history of breast cancer.
- ~ Find out the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy.
- ~ Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- ~ Get screened for breast cancer regularly.

Symptoms:

The American Cancer Society says that different people have different warning signs for breast cancer, and some people do not have any symptoms at all. Symptoms may include:

- ~ New lump in the breast or underarm.
- ~ Thickening or swelling of part of the breast.
- ~ Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- ~ Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast.
- ~ Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area.
- ~ Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- ~ Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.

~ Pain in any area of the breast. Keep in mind that some of these warning signs can happen with other conditions that are not cancer. If you have any signs that worry you, be sure to see your doctor right away.

Screening:



Breast cancer screening means checking a woman's breasts for cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. Three main tests are used to screen the breasts for cancer.

~ **Mammogram.** This is an X-ray of the breast.

Mammograms are the best method to detect breast cancer early when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. Having regular mammograms can lower breast cancer's fatality rate. Regular mammograms are recommended for women age 40 years and older.

~ **Clinical breast exam.** This is an examination by a doctor or nurse, who uses his or her hands to feel for lumps and other changes.

~ **Breast self-exam.** This is when you check your own breasts for lumps, changes in size or shape of the breast, or any other changes in the breasts or underarm.

For more information, visit:

- www.cancer.org
- www.komen.org
- www.nbcam.org

Fast Facts

~ The chance of a woman having invasive breast cancer some time during her life is about 1 in 8.

In the United States, breast cancer is:

- ~ The most common cancer in women, no matter your race or ethnicity.
- ~ The most common cause of death from cancer among Hispanic women.
- ~ The second most common cause of death from cancer (after lung cancer) among white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native women.

In 2007:

- ~ 178,480 women and 2,030 men developed breast cancer.
- ~ 40,460 women and 450 men died from breast cancer.

www.cancer.org