

Helpful Tips for Those Living With Depression

From time to time we all experience feelings of worry, unhappiness or grief. But when changes in mood interrupt one's ability to eat, sleep, work and participate in once enjoyable activities, depression may be the cause.

Those who live with depression may feel worn down, powerless and full of despair. Because of this, it can be extraordinarily difficult to find ways to help yourself. It's important to remember that all is not lost and once you start treatment, you will begin to feel better.

The National Institute of Mental Health offers the following tips to help those who are living with depression find the path to recovery:

- Do not wait too long to get evaluated or treated. There is research showing the longer one waits, the greater the impairment can be down the road. Try to see a professional as soon as possible.
- Try to be active and exercise. Participate in an event or activity that you once enjoyed.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Break up large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you can.
- Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative. Try not to isolate yourself and let others help you.
- Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Do not expect to suddenly "snap out of" your depression. Often during treatment for depression, sleep and appetite will begin to improve before your depressed mood lifts.
- Postpone important decisions, such as getting married or divorced or changing jobs, until you feel better. Discuss decisions with others who know you well and have a more objective view of your situation.
- Remember that positive thinking will replace negative thoughts as your depression responds to treatment.
- Continue to educate yourself about depression.

Make an appointment with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) who may refer you to a specialist, if needed. If you don't have a PCP, just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.

When you're living with any disease or condition, it may not always be easy to decide where to go for care. However, if you (or a loved one) are in crisis, it's best to go to the emergency room.

For less severe matters that still require immediate attention, if you can't get in to see your PCP, going to an urgent care facility can save you time and money.

Even if you require emergency or urgent care for your health situation, it's always best to have a relationship with a PCP who knows your history and understands what is happening with your health over time.