

## Faith Health Initiative



### Got the Blues?

It's normal to occasionally get the blues but sadness that lasts more than just a few days could mean something more serious.

#### What is depression?

Depression is more than just a low mood – it's a serious illness that has an impact on both physical and mental health.

#### What are the symptoms of depression?

Those suffering from depression may lose interest in work, hobbies and doing things they normally enjoy. They may lack energy, have difficulty sleeping or sleep more than usual. Some people feel irritable and some find it hard to concentrate. Depression makes life more difficult to manage from day to day.

#### What causes depression?

Most likely, depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. Some types of depression tend to run in families. However, depression can occur in people without family histories of depression too.

#### Who is affected?

Each year about 6.7% of U.S adults experience major depressive disorder. Women are 70 % more likely than men to experience depression during their lifetime. Non-Hispanic blacks are 40% less likely than non-Hispanic whites to experience depression during their lifetime. The average age of onset is 32 years old. Additionally, 3.3% of 13 to 18 year olds have experienced a seriously debilitating depressive disorder.

#### What are the treatment options?

Seeking help is the first step toward reclaiming your life. Contact your physician for an evaluation. Be honest about your concerns. Before your visit, write down your concerns and symptoms. Include severity and duration of each issue. Depression is treatable with therapy and medication but a critical component of recovery is achieved through social support. Reach out to those closest to you.

- ◆ Community's 24-hour crisis line (800-662-3445) provides immediate evaluations by phone and/ or face-to-face for psychiatric emergencies.
- ◆ Mental Health America helpline: (800) 273.TALK (317) 251.7575/TEXT CSIS to 839863 Help is available 24-Hours a Day and is Confidential and FREE. Suicide Intervention/Relationship Issues/Substance Abuse/Depression/Stress Management

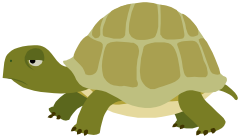
\*Source: National Institute on Mental Health

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### A Happier Lifestyle

While clinical depression can involve alterations in brain chemistry and requires medical intervention for resolution, occasional sadness can be remedied with lifestyle changes. Try these tips to keep your emotional health in check!

**Slow down.** Hectic lives include packed schedules that leave us feeling empty and unfulfilled. When we cram too much into our day, we end up scurrying from place to place without taking the time to enjoy. By slowing down, we can actually take the time to experience life's joys. Pick and choose what goes onto your calendar. Keep what's important but say "no" to what doesn't align with your core values.



**Practice Gratitude.** My friend shared with me an interesting article she had read about gratitude. The article posed the question, "What if you woke up today with only what you thanked God for yesterday?". Well, what would you have? To what extent do you practice gratitude throughout your day? Focusing on what you are thankful for shifts your thinking and changes your perspective. It may have been a rough day, but if you can find something good (and there is always something) you can transform your attitude.



**Eat (And drink) Healthier.** Refined sugars, processed foods, salt, and alcohol may contribute to feelings of sadness while foods like salmon and walnuts (high in Omega-3's), berries (high in mood enhancing anthocyanins), and beans (high in depression fighting folates) can actually keep you feeling mentally sharp and upbeat. Try drinking water, too. According to a 2012 study in the Journal of Nutrition, those who were mildly dehydrated were more pessimistic than their well-hydrated counterparts.



**Make a Change.** Feelings of powerlessness contribute to sadness. Some of the issues in our lives that cause us to feel down are out of our control, but there are other things that we can change that will lessen the burden we feel. Reclaim your power and start on the to-do list that has haunted you for years. Clean your junk drawer, change your oil, and even make an appointment for your annual physical. Once you feel the weight of some of these smaller tasks lifted, your outlook will brighten as well.



#### Philippians 4:6-8 (NIV)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

