

FEELING DEPRESSED?

Depression is a serious illness affecting millions of people; if you're suffering with depression, you're not alone. Sadly, once you've been treated for depression you're still at higher risk of it returning (relapse). This is because "depression forges a connection in the brain between sad mood and negative thoughts, so that even normal sadness can reawaken major negative thoughts." In people who are depressed, mood can affect thoughts in ways that can make an already low mood even lower and everyday types of stresses can trigger the descent into depression or perpetuate unhappiness.

How do you know if you're depressed?

Major depression is diagnosed by a doctor when someone experiences either of the 1st two symptoms in the following list, and at least 4 of the other symptoms, continuously over at least a 2-week period.

1. Feeling depressed or sad most of the day
2. Loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed
3. Significant change in body weight or change in appetite (either an increase or decrease)
4. Trouble sleeping at night or wanting to sleep during the day

5. Feeling slowed down or agitated during the day
6. Feeling tired most days
7. Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
8. Difficulties concentrating or thinking clearly
9. Recurrent thoughts of death or ideas about suicide

If you are experiencing these symptoms, it's not your fault and there is help available. Talk to your naturopathic doctor or medical doctor about your treatment options. Treating mood disorders like depression takes a holistic approach, addressing thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Prescription medication and traditional therapy can be very helpful, and there are also many natural therapies that can support positive mood. Naturopathic doctors can support you whether you're taking antidepressant medication or not using therapies such as: nutrition, acupuncture, lifestyle counseling, mind-body medicine, homeopathy and standardized herbal medicines.

Reference: "The Mindful Way through Depression" by Williams, Teasdale, Segal & Kabat-Zinn 2007.

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