Depression

What is depression?

Depression is medical condition that affects people of all genders, races, ages, and income levels. People who are depressed feel hopeless and suffer deep emotional pain for prolonged periods. Depression can cause dysfunction in every aspect of one's life.
Nearly one in five Americans will experience depression sometime in their lifetime, and more than 19 million Americans suffer from a depressive disorder each year.

Types and Causes of Depression:

There are three basic types of depression:

- **Major depression** is the most common type of depression. It tends to be episodic, but can persistently recur.
- **Dysthymia**, which is a chronic, unremitting depression. A dysthymia diagnosis requires fewer symptoms than major depression, but must be present for at least two years.
- **Bipolar Disorder,** called manic depression, is depression alternating with elated or irritable moods and increased energy.

Major depression and dysthymia are twice as prevalent among women than men: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men will experience these types of depression at some point in their lives.
Many factors can cause depression, including biochemistry, genetics, family history, substance abuse, and an illness or other difficult life events.

Getting Help!

Regardless of the cause, a person should be treated for depression. Two-thirds of people with depression do not seek treatment because they don't understand their symptoms or have fear of the stigma of mental illness. Yet of those who do, 80% are treated effectively with medication, psychotherapy, or both.
It is important to seek medical help early because:

- **Untreated depression is long lasting**. A depressive episode, left untreated, can last six months, or chronically for years.
- **Depression is likely to recur**. If a person experiences a single episode of depression, there is a 50% chance of having another. The chance of recurrence is 70% after two episodes and 90% after three episodes.
- **Depression can lead to suicide.** Depression is the leading cause of suicide, and a suicide occurs every 17 minutes in the U.S

Depression Symptoms

If you have been experiencing several of the depression symptoms below for more than 2 weeks, contact your doctor. If you have been thinking about death or suicide, call your doctor today.

- Feeling miserable and sad almost everyday?
- Losing interest in most activities?
- Feeling anxious or irritable?
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering?
- Feeling tired?
- Feeling guilty?
- Sleeping too much or too little?
- Eating too much or too little?
- Have medically unexplained aches and pains?
- Thinking of death or suicide?

In addition, excessive alcohol consumption and drug abuse is prevalent among those with underlying depressive disorders.

Signs for family / friends

Common behaviors that family/friends often notice in people with depression (usually these are abrupt or sudden behavior changes):

- Talking very negatively
- Acting unreasonably, without concern for others
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Picking fights, being irritable, critical, or mean
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Having trouble at work or school
- Talking suddenly about separation or divorce
- Complaining of aches and pains
- Eating too little or too much
- Sleeping too much or too little

Wellness Proposals

Source: www.familyaware.org

Provided Courtesy of Wellness Proposals