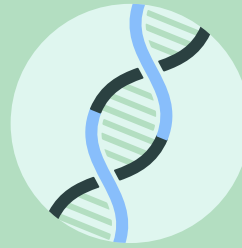




DEPRESSION



At least 1 in 10 Canadians will meet the criteria for a mood disorder like depression at some point in their lives. (1)



WHY DOES DEPRESSION HAPPEN

There are quite a few understandable reasons for why someone might be feeling depressed.

These include recent life changes (especially stressful ones), family genetics, past history (including trauma and abuse), the development of a negative world view, or recent hormonal shifts. Depression can often be better understood by considering a person's circumstances or biological factors, and is not an indication of their mental or moral strength in any way. It's also common to feel frustrated if you can't point to a clear cause for your depression. It's important to know that depression is nothing to be embarrassed about, and could likely happen to anyone given a particular set of circumstances. (2)

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Someone who is depressed might feel low mood, despair, sadness, irritability, anxiety or numbness. They may either sleep too much or too little, and might have gained or lost a great deal of weight recently. They tend to have lost interest in what they previously enjoyed doing, and may experience unexplained aches and pains. People who are depressed may also have trouble making decisions, feel fatigued, feel guilty or unworthy, or have suicidal thoughts*. (2)

SLEEP



Most people who are depressed also have trouble sleeping. This can either present as sleeping too much or sleeping too little. At times it can be a bit of a cycle - sleep problems can contribute to depression, and depression can contribute to sleep problems. So what can you do about your sleep?

One way to improve your sleep is to keep to a routine. This means getting into bed for the night and waking up at about the same time every day, and allowing for a possible 7-9 hours of sleep.

You may be tempted to nap during the day if your sleep quality has been low, but make sure not to nap for longer than 20 minutes as it can disturb your sleep later.

A few more sleep tips: avoid alcohol before bed, try to get outside during the day to help realign your circadian rhythm, and exercise in the first half of the day rather than at night. Even light exercise will help to improve your sleep! (2, 3)



EXERCISE

We know just how hard it can be to exercise when you're feeling depressed... We promise it's worth it, though! Exercising regularly can even be as effective for your depression as taking antidepressants.

Exercise releases proteins that help nerve cells to grow and create connections. This type of growth can be transformative in a part of your brain called the hippocampus, which during prolonged stress (like depression) can start to decrease in size if that stress is left untreated. Getting moving will help care for those nerve cells!

But let's be honest - when you're feeling depressed, your motivation to exercise may be especially low. The best way to get started is to keep the bar low - start with 5 minutes of light exercise a day, and eventually work your way up to 15 minutes. Make sure to pick something you don't mind doing. Maybe for you this is walking in your neighbourhood, doing yoga, or gardening.

Over the next few weeks, you might find it easier to extend your time spent exercising, and you should start seeing some improvements in how you're feeling by then.

Exercise is not a quick fix, though, and should be incorporated into your lifestyle over the long term to continue seeing benefits. That's why it's so important to pick something you don't mind, and that you can sustain over time. (4)

TREATMENT



Most forms of depression ARE treatable. Earlier treatment is especially effective, so ask for help when you can.

To get started, talk with your doctor or mental health professional about feeling depressed and ask about your options. These may include therapy, group support, lifestyle changes or medication. (5)

LOVED ONES



If you are caring for someone who is depressed, there are a few important things to know:

The first is that depression is an illness, and like any other illness, healing requires treatment and is not simply about pulling yourself up "by the bootstraps". Take time to educate yourself on depression. It's also very important to take care of yourself! Seek out your own counselling or support groups if you are struggling in your caregiving.



*SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

If you or someone you love is having suicidal thoughts, it's time to get help.

Call the BC Crisis Line at 1-800-784-2433, or go to your nearest emergency room. See more resources on the other side of this page.

If you are caring for a depressed person, never agree to keep secrets, as their safety may depend on it.

MORE INFORMATION

1. Pearson, Caryn, Teresa Janz and Jennifer Ali. 2013. "Mental and substance use disorders in Canada" Health at a Glance. September. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-624-X.
2. https://mdsc.ca/docs/MDSC_What_is_Depression.pdf
3. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org>
4. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/exercise-is-an-all-natural-treatment-to-fight-depression>
5. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression>

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24/7 HELP LINES - PHONE

1-800-SUICIDE	1-800-784-2433
Crisis Line / Mental Health Support	310-6789 (no area code needed)
Fraser Health Crisis Line	604-951-8855
Kids Help Line (BC)	310-1234 (no area code needed)
Kids Help Line (Canada)	1-800-668-6868
KUU-US Crisis Line (Aboriginal)	1-800-588-8717
VictimLink	1-800-563-0808
Youth Against Violence Line	1-800-680-4264
Child Protection Services BC	1-800-663-9122

TEXT OR ONLINE CHAT

YouthSpace (Text)	778-783-0177
Youth Against Violence (Text)	604-836-6381
youthinbc.com	Daily from 12pm - 1am
youthspace.ca	Daily from 6pm - 12am
kidshelpphone.ca	Wed - Sun, 3pm - 11pm

SUBSTANCE USE HELP

Alcohol and Drug Resources	604-660-9382
Pacific Community Resource Society	604-836-6273
Little House Society (Tsawwassen)	778-434-3119
Alcoholics Anonymous	604-434-3933
Narcotics Anonymous	604-873-1018

MENTAL WELLBEING APPS

BoosterBuddy
Calm
Headspace
Mindshift
MyLife