GETTING TREATMENT

Depression can be treated

Depression can be challenging to deal with. In most cases, it does not go away on its own. But the good news is that **most people can feel better when they get the care they need.** The right treatment at the right time can stop your depression from getting worse. That's why it's important to get help as soon as you notice symptoms of depression.

Treatment for depression can be effective, but it might not always work as quickly as you want it to. You might notice your symptoms getting better a little bit at a time, not all at once. It's important not to give up hope. If you stick with your care plan, you can start feeling like yourself, without the symptoms of depression.

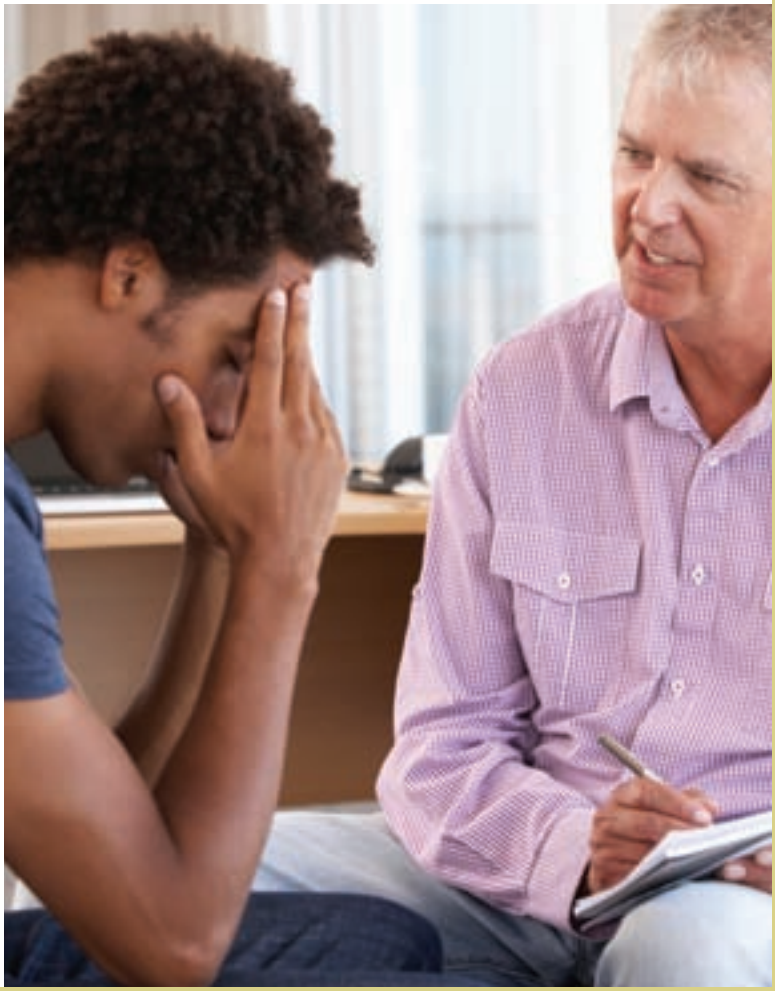
Setting your treatment goals

Talk openly with your health care provider about how you're feeling now and about how you expect to feel after you begin treatment. Different people may have different goals. You'll know that your treatment plan is working when depression stops getting in the way of your daily life. But don't stop there. The right treatment may help you get back to the life you enjoyed before you had depression.

What are some treatment options?

The most common treatments for depression are talk therapy and medicine. For most people, a combination of these 2 options works best.

Remember, it can take a while to find the right treatment for your depression. Keep working with your health care provider.



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Talk therapy

Talk therapy, also called *psychotherapy,* can be an effective treatment for many people with depression. With talk therapy, you speak with a mental health counselor about your thoughts, feelings, and mood. This can help you understand your depression so that you can deal with it better. It can also help you set personal goals, including:

Finding healthy ways to deal with stress

Figuring out your "triggers"—people or things that make you feel worse

Having better relationships with friends and family members

Setting up a routine that you feel comfortable with

Changing behaviors or thoughts that can make you feel worse

Talk therapy is usually done with an expert in mental health—typically, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, a counselor, or a psychiatric nurse.

Medicines

Depression is often treated with medicines called *antidepressants*. These medicines help control the balance of important chemicals in the brain.

Medicines affect people in different ways. Here are a few things you should know about antidepressants:

- It can take as long as 8 weeks for some antidepressants to work their best so that your health care provider can assess whether they are working for you
- You might need to try a few antidepressants before you find one that works best for you
- You may need to add another medicine to the one you're currently taking

Keep track of which medicines you have tried and how you felt when you were taking them. Talk with your health care provider. Together, you can find a treatment that works for you.

Starting a new medicine

If your health care provider suggests that you take medicine for your depression, you might have some questions. Talk with your health care provider about the best way to take it. You'll also want to know about the risks and possible side effects of the medicine.

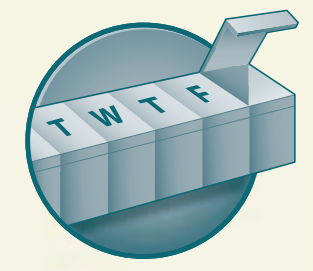
It's important to keep taking your medicine exactly the way your health care provider told you to. That means you shouldn't change the amount of medicine you take or stop taking your medicine, even if:

- **You have side effects.** Talk with your health care provider about side effects that bother you. The side effects might go away if your health care provider changes the amount you take. Also, some side effects may start to go away as your body gets used to the new medicine
- **You start to feel better.** That can mean that the medicine is working. If you stop taking it, the depression could return
- **You think your medicine isn't working.** Remember, many medicines for treating depression can take as long as 8 weeks before they work their best so that your health care provider can assess whether they are working for you. If you don't feel better as soon as your health care provider expects you to, he or she might need to change the amount of medicine you take, switch to a different medicine, or add an extra medicine

Stopping a medicine before your health care provider tells you to can make your depression worse. It can also cause side effects. So be sure to keep taking your medicine until your health care provider tells you it's OK to stop.

Tips for remembering to take your medicine

Sometimes it might be hard to remember to take your medicine, especially if you are taking more than one kind of medicine. Below are some things you can try to help you remember to take your medicine:



Try using a pill organizer.

With a pill organizer, all the pills you need to take for the day are in one place. That makes it easy to see whether you have taken all your medicine each day

Connect taking your medicine to your daily routine.

For example, if there's a medicine you take in the morning, keep the bottle next to your cereal box as a reminder to take it when you eat breakfast. Just remember to keep medicines where children cannot reach them

Set a reminder on your cell phone.

Keep your phone near you so you'll hear it. You may want to have a special ring tone for your medicine reminder

Make a checklist of your medicines to keep track of when you take them. Try using the medicine tracker below. Make copies of it before you write on it so you can track all the medicines you take. You can keep it on your refrigerator or wherever will be helpful for you.

My medicine tracker

Name of medicine *Example: Medicine ABC*			
Why I take this medicine *Example: For my depression*			
When I started taking this medicine *Example: August 2013*			
How much I'll take *Example: 1 pill (40 mg) each day*			
Time I'll take it *Example: At bedtime*			
How I'll remind myself *Example: Cell phone alarm*			
Where I'll keep it *Example: On my nightstand*			
How I'm doing on this medicine so far *Examples: It makes me tired; I don't feel as sad.*			

Remember—depression can be treated. Talk with your health care provider about your options. Together, you can figure out a plan that can help you feel like yourself, without the symptoms of depression.

For more information about treating depression, visit or call:

Mental Health America: www.mentalhealthamerica.net or 1-800-969-NMHA (1-800-969-6642)

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