

Treatments for Depression

Medications for Depression

Medications help balance chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters. Although scientists are not sure exactly how these chemicals work, they do know they affect a person's mood.

Types of antidepressant medications that help keep the neurotransmitters at the correct levels are:

- SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)
- SNRIs (serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors)
- MAOIs (monoamine oxidase inhibitors)
- Tricyclics.

These different types of medications affect different chemicals in the brain. Medications affect everyone differently. Sometimes several different types have to be tried before finding the one that works. If you start taking medication, tell your doctor about any side effects right away.

Psychotherapy

Several types of psychotherapy-or "talk therapy"-can help people with depression. There are two main types of psychotherapy commonly used to treat depression: cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT). CBT teaches people to change negative styles of thinking and behaving that may contribute to their depression. IPT helps people understand and work through troubled personal relationships that may cause their depression or make it worse.

For mild to moderate depression, psychotherapy may be the best treatment option. However, for major depression or for certain people, psychotherapy may not be enough. For teens, a combination of medication and psychotherapy may work the best to treat major depression and help keep the depression from happening again. Also, a study about treating depression in older adults found that those who got better with medication and IPT were less likely to have depression again if they continued their combination treatment for at least two years.

Psychosocial treatments. These treatments help patients deal with their illness from day to day. The treatments are helpful after patients find a medication that works. Treatments include:

1. Drug and alcohol treatment: this is often combined with other treatments
2. Family education: ways to help the whole family learn how to cope with the illness and help their loved one
3. Illness management skills: ways for the patient to learn about the illness and manage it from day to day

4. Rehabilitation: help with getting a job and everyday living skills
5. Self-help groups: support from other people with the illness and their families
6. Therapy: talking with a therapist about living with the illness and learning how to manage symptoms, like hearing voices or having delusions.

How can I find treatment for depression and who pays?

Most insurance plans cover treatment for depression. Check with your own insurance company to find out what type of treatment is covered. If you don't have insurance, local city or county governments may offer treatment at a clinic or health center, where the cost is based on income. Medicaid plans also may pay for depression treatment.

If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your family doctor. Others who can help are:

- Psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed social workers, or licensed mental health counselors
- Health maintenance organizations
- Community mental health centers
- Hospital psychiatry departments and outpatient clinics
- Mental health programs at universities or medical schools
- State hospital outpatient clinics
- Family services, social agencies or clergy
- Peer support groups
- Private clinics and facilities
- Employee assistance programs
- Local medical and/or psychiatric societies.

You can also check the phone book under "mental health," "health," "social services," "hotlines," or "physicians" for phone numbers and addresses. An emergency room doctor also can provide temporary help and can tell you where and how to get further help.

What if I or someone I know is in crisis?

If you are thinking about harming yourself, or know someone who is, tell someone who can help immediately.

- Call your doctor.
- Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room to get immediate help or ask a friend or family member to help you do these things.
- Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255); TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to talk to a trained counselor.
- Make sure you or the suicidal person is not left alone.

Adapted from NIMH website:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/how-is-depression-detected-and-treated.shtml>