



Preventing and treating depression as you get older



Some of the life changes that come with ageing can cause depression. If you think you might be at risk, read on...

What you should know

- Depression can happen to any of us as we age and is not a sign of weakness.
- It's an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that we normally enjoy, accompanied by difficulty carrying out daily activities.
- Depression among older people is often associated with physical conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic pain; difficult life events, such as losing a loved one; and a reduced ability to do things that were possible when younger.
- People with depression also normally experience several of the following: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
- Depression can be treated – with talking therapies, medication or both.

What you can do

- Keep up with activities that you enjoy and find alternatives for things that are no longer possible.
- Stay connected with friends and family.
- Eat at regular intervals and get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly if you can – even if it's just a short walk.
- Avoid or restrict alcohol intake and only take medicine as prescribed by your health-care provider.
- If you think you may be depressed, talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Seek professional help – your local health-care worker or doctor is a good place to start.

REMEMBER: Don't lose hope and don't be afraid to ask for help – there's lots that can be done to prevent and treat depression.

