

Weekly Wellness Tip

Treatment Options for Depression

Most people with depression, even those with severe disorders, can be helped with treatment. The earlier treatment begins, the more effective it is. If you believe you may be depressed, it is recommended that you contact the TeamHealth Employee Assistance Program to ensure you are referred to someone who can help with your situation (EAP contact information listed in the box at the bottom of this page). The EAP can discuss treatment options and may make a referral for an in-person visit. Treatment may also begin by visiting a doctor, who can rule out medical causes of depression-like symptoms. After evaluating your symptoms, a doctor may prescribe medication, psychotherapy, or both. Some people do best with medication and some with psychotherapy. Other people need a combination of both.

Medication

If an antidepressant is prescribed for you:

- Ask about the side effects. Find out about any testing that may need to be done to monitor the effects of the medication on your body.
- Be patient. Finding the right medication can take time. Work closely with your doctor and report any side effects and benefits that you experience.
- Always talk with your doctor before you stop taking a medication, even if you feel better. Some medications must be stopped gradually to give your body time to adjust. If you have bipolar disorder or chronic major depression, you may need to take medication daily to avoid disabling symptoms.
- Never mix medications, prescribed or over-the-counter, without talking to your doctor. Tell your dentist or any other medical professional who prescribes a drug that you are taking antidepressants. Some drugs that are safe when taken alone can be dangerous if taken with other medications.
- Avoid alcohol, including beer, wine, and hard liquor. Alcohol can reduce the effectiveness of antidepressants. Talk with your doctor about how to plan for situations in which alcohol may be served.
- Call your doctor if you have a question about any drug or if you are having a problem you believe is drug-related.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is a form of treatment that can help a person solve life issues, reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, improve relationships and social skills, and even improve job performance. Research shows that psychotherapy is effective in treating most common mental health problems. For example, about 80 percent of people suffering from depression make significant progress in psychotherapy.

Several types of psychotherapy can help with depression. Some types of psychotherapy are short term, or designed to last about 10 to 20 weeks. Other types of psychotherapy may require longer treatment over many months or even years. The two main types of therapy that have been shown to help with depression are the following:

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). This is a form of short-term therapy that has been found to help with some types of depression. Cognitive-behavioral therapists help clients change the negative styles of thinking and behaving often associated with depression.
- Interpersonal therapy (IPT). This type of therapy helps people understand and work through difficulties in their personal relationships that may cause depression or make it worse. Therapists may help patients explore the causes of actions, such as past experiences.

Source: LifeWorks

Employee Assistance Program

All employees have access to our free, confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Phone calls are unlimited and can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, if an in-person referral is made through the EAP, the first three visits are covered at 100%. To access the EAP, call 888.887.4114 (UnitedHealthcare members) or 800.854.1446 (all employees).