

Options for dealing with depression

When you're depressed, it can seem like you'll never feel happy again. But there is light at the end of the tunnel... and the first step is getting the help you need.

There are a number of treatments that have been shown to work in overcoming depression.

This Fact Sheet tells you more about them.

The most important thing is to find a treatment that works for you.

This will depend on your level of depression, and what you feel most comfortable with.

Self help strategies

If you have mild or moderate depression, there are some simple things you can try.

- A regular routine of physical exercise has been found to be the most helpful. Getting fresh air and sunlight every day is good for improving sleep problems as well
- Other natural therapies that help you to relax include yoga, meditation/breathing exercises, massage therapy and acupuncture
- There are some good self-help books available on coping with depression. Check out your library or bookstore, or see what people have recommended on The Lowdown message board
- Remember to avoid alcohol or recreational drugs, as these can make depression worse.

Talking therapies

In general, psychological and family therapies (counselling) are the main treatment for depression in children and young people. Psychological treatments are also known as 'talking therapies'. They work by changing negative patterns of thinking or sorting out relationship problems.

Psychological treatments can help to:

- Speed your recovery
- Prevent depression from recurring
- Identify ways to manage the illness and stay well.

Different kinds of talking therapies are provided by counsellors (sometimes also called "therapists"), psychologists, psychiatrists and other health professionals.

Two that are known to work for depression are:

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is a programme of counselling which helps to change negative thought patterns. It works on the basis that the way we think affects the way we feel. For more on CBT check out *Fact Sheet 8 - Problem solving and getting sorted*
- Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) - this has a focus on improving relationships, and how we relate to other people.

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Medications

People who are depressed often feel physically unwell. Anti-depressant drug treatments can relieve the physical symptoms of depression.

If you have depression, your doctor may think it is useful to start you on anti-depressant medication. This may happen if your depression is severe, or other treatments haven't worked, or are not available in your area.

Your doctor will provide you with information about the medicine, how to take it, and possible side effects. Drug treatments for depression are not addictive, but like any drug they can have side-effects (such as nausea and headaches).

Anti-depressant medications can only be prescribed by a GP or other medical doctor.

Some things to remember about treatment

- Depression is a very common medical condition
- Effective treatments are available, and it's important to get help as soon as possible
- Counselling therapies are the recommended 'first-line' of treatment for children and young people
- In some cases a doctor may think an antidepressant is also necessary
- Your doctor should provide you (and your family) with clear information about the pros and cons of taking antidepressants, and the steps to take in a crisis situation or emergency
- Regular check-ups are important
- With the right treatment, the vast majority of young people make a full recovery from depression.

Getting help

Most people recover from depression and enjoy life again. But delaying treatments may delay recovery - so it's important to take that first step.

To find out more:

If you want to chat about how you're feeling, or you've got any questions, you can;

Text The Lowdown team for free on 5626.

Email The Lowdown team in the Chat section of www.thelowdown.co.nz. You can also ask them to give you a call back if you want to talk on the phone.

Call the Depression Helpline on 0800 111 757

Recommended sites.

These sites are also worth checking out:

www.depression.org.nz
information about depression

www.ybblue.com.au
beyondblue's website for young people

moodgym.anu.edu.au
A free online Cognitive Behaviour
Therapy treatment