

DEPRESSION DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Welcome to Better Health

Humana Military offers disease management programs to assist beneficiaries with managing chronic diseases to improve their health. Our team partners with beneficiaries and their clinicians to identify problems, establish goals and monitor progress through regular follow-up care.

We are excited to welcome you to our depression disease management program. The program is offered to you at no cost and participation is not required.

This booklet provides you with some information about depression and can help with understanding your condition and identifying and managing your symptoms.

Please visit our website at [HumanaMilitary.com/DM](https://www.humanamilitary.com/DM) or call **(800) 881-9227** for more information about depression and our disease management initiative.



EAST REGION

[HumanaMilitary.com](https://www.humanamilitary.com)

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energy, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite and poor concentration that interfere with daily activities. This leads to difficulties such as marital conflict, suicidal tendencies, loss of employment and poor quality of life overall. Treatment is often needed to get better.

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

The exact causes of depression are unknown. Experts believe that a combination of factors play a role:

- **Biological:** Everyone has brain chemicals called “neurotransmitters.” People with depression may have too much or not enough of these chemicals.
- **Genetic:** A family history of depression increases the risk of developing the condition.
- **Environmental:** Trauma, loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship or any stressful situation may trigger symptoms of depression.
- **Psychological:** A person’s mental and emotional state can influence his/her perception of events in his/her life.
- **Co-occurring conditions:** People who have certain physical illnesses such as stroke, heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes and hormonal disorders are more likely to develop depression. It is important to treat both depression and any co-occurring conditions.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION?

Depression affects everyone differently. Some people experience only a few symptoms while others may experience many. The severity and frequency of symptoms and how long they last will vary depending on the individual and the stage of his or her illness.

To be diagnosed with depression, some of the following signs and symptoms must be present most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks:

- Thoughts of death or of hurting oneself
- Persistent sad or down mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities usually enjoyed
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness or guilt
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or feeling tired all the time
- Extreme changes in appetite and/or weight
- Problems concentrating, remembering or making decisions

Management Begins With Awareness



Depression is more than feeling sad, empty or irritable for a few days. If you are one of the estimated 16 million American adults who suffer from depression, know that depression is a serious medical condition, and like many other health problems, depression can become worse if it is ignored.

Good management and active involvement in your healthcare decisions are key to controlling depression and living a healthy and active life.

Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is an illness that affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself and the way one thinks about things. People with depression may experience symptoms like loss of interest or pleasure in regular activities, decreased

HOW IS DEPRESSION DIAGNOSED?

Your doctor may determine a diagnosis of depression based on:

- Physical exam. Your doctor may do a physical exam and ask questions about your health. In some cases, depression may be linked to an underlying physical health problem.
- Lab tests. For example, your doctor may do a blood test called a complete blood count or test your thyroid to make sure it is functioning properly.
- Psychiatric evaluation. Your behavioral health professional asks about your symptoms, thoughts, feelings and behavior patterns. You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire to help answer these questions.
- DSM-5. Your behavioral health professional may use the criteria for depression listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association.

HOW IS DEPRESSION TREATED?



Once diagnosed, depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. Like many illnesses, the earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is and the greater the likelihood that recurrence can be prevented.

Depression is most commonly treated with counseling, prescription medication(s) or a combination of the two. If these treatments do not reduce symptoms, Electroconvulsive Therapy

(ECT) and other brain stimulation therapies may be considered. Your doctor will work with you to decide what treatment options are right for you.

WHAT MEDICATIONS ARE USED TO TREAT DEPRESSION?

Prescription medications called antidepressants can often help you recover from depression more quickly. Different types of antidepressants are available. In general, antidepressants work by balancing brain chemicals and regulating moods.

The medication and most effective dosage vary from person to person. It may take time to find the right medication for you. Talk with your doctor about benefits, risks and possible side effects.

Common types of medication to treat depression include:

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)
- Serotonin Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)
- Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)
- Mirtazapine and bupropion (other antidepressant medications that don't fall into the above categories, but are safe and effective for many patients)

Remember that negative thinking (blaming yourself, feeling hopeless, expecting failure and other similar thoughts) is part of depression – as the depression lifts, so will the negative thinking.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT ANTIDEPRESSANTS FOR THE TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION:

- Antidepressants sometimes cause mild and often temporary side effects. If you experience any unusual reactions or side effects that interfere with normal functioning, contact your doctor right away.
- It is important to take the medication(s) as directed by your doctor and remember that continued use of medication is important to manage depression.
- It can take a few weeks before a new medication(s) begins to work. If your symptoms do not improve after approximately six weeks, talk to your doctor about changing the dose or trying a different drug.
- Some people need to try several different antidepressants before finding one that works.
- Talk with your doctor before you stop taking or change the dosage of medication(s) to prevent the depression from returning and to avoid withdrawal symptoms.
- Anyone taking antidepressants should be closely watched for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Monitoring is especially important if this is the person's first time on depression medication or if the dose has recently been changed. If you spot the warning signs in yourself or a loved one, contact your doctor or therapist immediately.

HOW CAN PSYCHOTHERAPY HELP WITH DEPRESSION?

Several types of psychotherapy – or counseling – can help people with depression. In general, therapy involves regular visits with a behavioral health professional for help with issues like relationship problems, mood swings and financial difficulties.

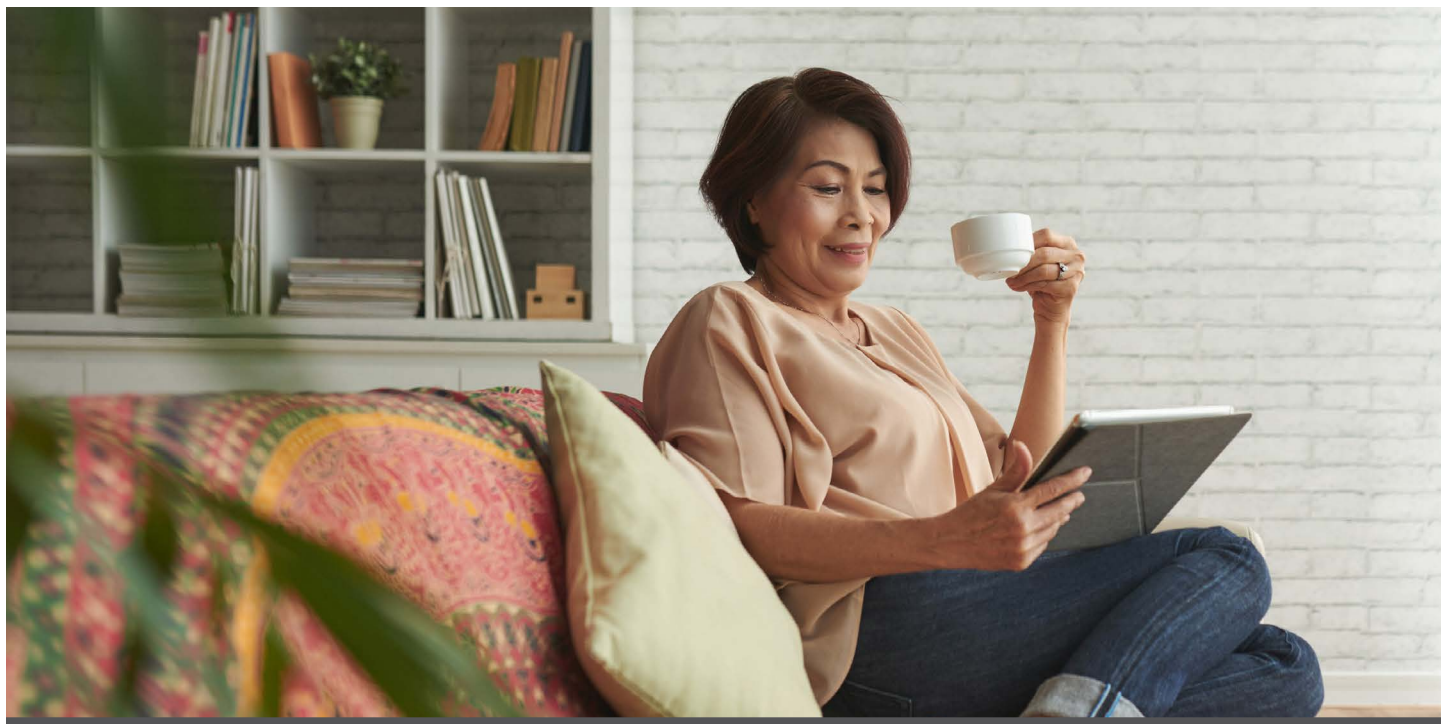
Depending on your needs, short-term (10-20 weeks) and long-term (over 20 weeks) therapy may be available. Therapy can help you learn to:

- Cope with stress
- Change negative thought processes
- Manage emotions
- Improve relationships



COMMON TYPES OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

	Overview	Goal	Duration	Severity
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	For some people, depression is caused by a combination of negative thoughts and behaviors resulting from those thoughts. Since thoughts and behaviors are learned, you can also learn new skills that can help improve your mood and increase your ability to handle stress.	The goal of CBT is to help you make your thoughts and behaviors more positive, despite difficult and challenging situations.	16-20 sessions	Moderate to major depression
Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)	Some people experience depression because of problematic relationships. IPT has been found to be most helpful for improving communication and conflict resolution and/or increasing problem-solving skills.	The goal of IPT is to help you solve relationship problems, such as problems with your family, friends and co-workers.	16-20 sessions	Mild to moderate depression
Behavioral Therapy (BT) / Behavioral Activation (BA)	People with depression often isolate themselves and avoid social situations. BT/BA encourages you to engage in enjoyable activities that have been shown to improve mood.	The goals of BT/BA are to highlight positive life events and to reinforce social skills.	8-15 sessions	Mild to moderate depression
Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)	MBCT teaches you mindfulness-based skills like meditation and imagery to help you overcome negative thoughts and emotions. MBCT helps you to become more detached and to observe your thoughts as objects.	The goals of MBCT are to learn new skills that can help to improve your mood and to increase your ability to handle stress.	8-16 sessions	Mild to moderate depression
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)	ACT encourages the acceptance of emotional distress and promotes the choice of goal-directed behaviors.	The goal of ACT is to help you acknowledge the difficulty in your life without feeling the need to escape from or avoid your emotions.	3-5 sessions	Mild to moderate depression
Problem Solving Therapy (PST)	PST teaches you how to solve problems in a step-by-step way.	The goals of PST are to solve problems, achieve goals and change your behavior.	6-8 sessions	Mild to moderate depression



SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

If you have depression, it can be extremely difficult to take action to help yourself. However, it is important to realize that your feelings are part of the depression and may not accurately reflect actual circumstances.

You can help control your depression by adopting healthy lifestyle habits. Here is a list of suggestions to help you get started:

1. Schedule and keep regular appointments with your doctor:



Your doctor is the one best able to help you deal with your situation. Other diseases (known as comorbidities) may play a role in your depression's progression. It is important for you to tell your doctor if you are being seen by other physicians for other health reasons.

2. Spend time with people who can support you:



It is easy to avoid contact with people when you're feeling down, but it's during these times that you actually need support the most. You might try to explain to them what you are feeling or just ask them to be with you during an activity.

3. Rest frequently and get enough sleep:



Sleep problems are common for those with depression and can lead to serious health problems. You can improve the amount and quality of your sleep, but be patient. If you are well-rested, you will be better able to face the challenges of daily life and enjoy the rewards, too.

4. Eat a balanced diet:



Eat a variety of healthy foods every day. Many people find that when they eat more nutritious, balanced meals, they not only feel better physically, but also emotionally and mentally. Ask your doctor about the right foods to eat and which ones to avoid.

5. Exercise regularly but stay within what your health condition allows:



Regular exercise can improve your mood. Even taking a short walk every day may help you feel a little better. Talk to your doctor about the type of activities you can do.

6. Limit/Avoid using alcohol, illegal drugs and tobacco:



If you don't drink, don't start. If you do drink, talk to your doctor about drinking in moderation. This means limiting alcohol consumption to one drink per day for women and two per day for men. Alcohol is a depressant and can add to feeling down and alone. Alcohol and illegal drugs can also reduce the effectiveness of antidepressant medications and may create harmful side effects.

You don't have to do all of these things right away! Start slowly and take small steps on your way to feeling better.

7. Manage stress in your life:



Find ways to reduce stress to help relieve some of the depression you feel. It can help you feel more in control and more positive about yourself as a result.

To reduce stress, it may help to:

- Pace yourself. Don't try take on too many things at once.
- Plan your time. A schedule helps make your responsibilities and tasks easier to manage.
- Allow time for rest and recreation.
- Think about the things in life that cause stress for you. Think of positive ways you can deal with them.
- Plan ahead of time how you will handle stressful situations.
- Practice relaxation techniques every day.

8. Learn to relax:



Relaxation training plays an important part in therapy. It can help you stay in control relieve physical symptoms of depression.

Deep-breathing exercises. Doing these exercises every day can help prevent depression symptoms from building up.

Follow these steps:

- Sit comfortably or lie on your back.
- Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose for a count of five.
- Hold your breath for three to five seconds.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of five.
- Repeat several times until you feel calm and relaxed.

Meditation. This can help calm you and clear your mind of worries. Follow these steps:

- Wear comfortable clothing. Find a quiet place. Sit or lie down.
- Close your eyes.
- Concentrate on a single word, object or calming thought, such as the word "calm" or "peace."
- Don't worry if other thoughts or images pop into your mind while you are doing this. Just relax and return to what you were focusing on.
- Continue until you feel relaxed and refreshed.

Other relaxation techniques:

- Visualization: you imagine a pleasant, peaceful scene (a deserted beach, for example) and focus on it for a set amount of time.
- Guided imagery: you are guided through a series of exercises in which you visualize peaceful scenes.
- Biofeedback: special devices help you learn how to relax your body.
- Listening to quiet, relaxing music or relaxation tapes.

9. Try to keep a positive attitude:



With treatment, most people with depression begin to feel better, but it may take some time. You can learn to feel better about yourself and more in control of your life. A "can-do" attitude can make a difference when it comes to treating depression.

10. Understand your treatment plan:

Your treatment plan will likely depend on the type of symptoms you have. Treatment may include:

- Psychotherapy
- Medication
- A combination of both



You have a better chance of having your treatment work if you do the following:

- See your doctor regularly to have your condition monitored.
- Ask your doctor about other treatment options.
- Tell your doctor about all symptoms you have.
- Keep a diary of your symptoms and the days you experience the symptoms. This will help you see progress. However, it may take a few weeks before you notice a change.
- Talk with someone supportive about your feelings and concerns.

