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Depression Overview

Major depressive disorder (depression) is not just a temporary mood, and it is not a sign of personal weakness. Some emotional symptoms include sadness, loss of interest in things you once enjoyed, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, restlessness, and trouble concentrating or making decisions. Some physical symptoms include fatigue, vague aches and pains, headaches, and changes in weight or sleep patterns. One of the most commonly accepted theories suggests that two naturally occurring chemicals, serotonin and norepinephrine, are believed to affect core mood and pain symptoms of depression.

Depression is a complex disease and there is no simple explanation.

Some risk factors:

- Family history
- Death or illness of a loved one
- Stressful conflicts, such as fights with family members or
- Disputes at work
- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Major life events, such as moving, graduating from college, or
- Changing jobs, getting married or divorced, becoming a new
- Parent, or retiring.
- Financial difficulties

Rule out thyroid problems, nutritional problems, or a reaction to current medications.

Diagnosing Depression: You must have at least 5 of the following with an episode of depression that has lasted at least two weeks.

1. You are depressed, sad or blue
2. You have lost interest in things you once enjoyed
3. Your appetite is much less or greater than usual
4. You have a lot of trouble sleeping or sleep too much
5. You are so agitated, restless, or slowed down that others have begun to notice
6. You are tired and have no energy
7. You feel worthless or excessively guilty about things you have done or not done
8. You have trouble concentrating, thinking clearly, or making decisions
9. You feel you would be better off dead or have thoughts of killing yourself