

Q. How can I tell if I'm depressed?

A. Depression is a real medical condition with many symptoms. These include persistent sadness, anxiety, and feeling hopeless. If you are depressed, you might have lost interest in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed.

Depression can also cause problems with sleep, energy level, sexual function, motivation, memory, and concentration. For some people, it causes a lack of interest in food; for others, it causes overeating. If you're depressed, everyday activities might seem like an enormous challenge to do.

If you think you're suffering from depression, you're not alone. Millions of people struggle with depression from life experiences such as the death of a loved one, job loss, divorce, or serious illness. Other factors like genetics, personal problems, social isolation, or substance abuse are common factors linked to depression.

To help find out if you are depressed, take these self-assessments for both depression and coping. Here are the links:

How to Recognize Depression

<http://tinyurl.com/79gkaqq>

Stress & Coping Self-Test

<http://tinyurl.com/6tcqk65>

These tools can help you assess this fairly well. Then, if you are experiencing depression, the next question is, what do you do about it?



You might want to talk to a mental health counselor. This can help identify how you are coping and what it is that you would like to improve in your life. It usually helps to have a professional person to talk to. A counselor can help you improve your emotional life and set personal goals.

Even if your "blues" are just passing through, one way to help yourself right now is to engage in daily physical activity. As you become more physically active, your emotional health can improve, right along with your physical health. Regular exercise, such as walking briskly for 30 or more minutes most days of the week, can:

- Boost your mental health
- Improve your mood
- Help you feel more energetic
- Help you feel good about yourself and how you are taking better care of your body
- Prevent many serious health problems including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and worsening depression

Here is an article to read as well on maintaining good mental-emotional health.

http://helpguide.org/mental/mental_emotional_health.htm

I hope this gives you some ideas to try.

