



# Understanding depression

Depression is a real illness that affects 1 in 20 Americans over the age of 12. Depression can significantly affect your life by increasing your risk of anxiety, substance abuse, heart disease and suicide, but effective treatments do exist. Recognizing the symptoms is an important first step in receiving the help needed to achieve long-term recovery. You don't have to be feeling all of these symptoms to be depressed. You might be depressed but experience only a few of these symptoms. Like most feelings, depression is not "all or nothing." You may be mildly depressed, moderately depressed or very depressed—and the symptoms will vary accordingly.

**IU Health EAP**  
T: 317.962.8001  
800.745.4838 ext. 2 (toll free)

## Signs and symptoms of depression

- Feeling sad, low, blue, despondent, gloomy, down in the dumps
- Loss of appetite and weight loss, or increase in appetite and weight gain
- Fatigue, low energy, lethargic, feel too tired to do things
- Slowed thinking, speech or movement, or restless and agitated
- Loss of interest, don't enjoy things you used to enjoy
- Feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, self-reproach, guilt, shame
- Feelings of helplessness, unable to cope with even small tasks
- Problems sleeping, insomnia or sleeping more than usual
- Social withdrawal, avoiding seeing people
- Decrease in sexual interest and activity
- Thoughts of death or suicide

## Assessment

Are you experiencing symptoms of depression? Call EAP today for your free assessment and EAP sessions and start the road to recovery. Depression is very treatable, and we can help.



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### **Tips: Try these ways to improve depressive symptoms**

- Stay connected to others by reaching out to close family and friends. Social support has the power to improve your mood and outlook.
- Get moving. Exercise is a powerful depression fighter. Exercise improves your mood, reduces fatigue and enhances mindfulness.
- Spend time in the sunlight. Lack of sunshine can make depression worse. Take a short walk or enjoy a meal outdoors.
- Minimize sugar and carbs. You may crave these foods, but they can negatively impact your mood and energy levels. Instead, try to eat foods high in B vitamins like leafy greens, citrus fruits, beans or eggs.

### **Next steps**

- Recognize if there is a problem. If you have symptoms of depression, make an appointment with your healthcare provider today. No provider? Visit IU Health today to find a doctor and schedule an appointment.
- During your appointment, discuss your symptoms honestly and work with your provider to develop a treatment plan that works for you.

- To explore ways to reduce the symptoms of mild depression or to learn about additional IU Health resources, make an appointment with a certified health coach. Call Healthy Results today at 317.963.9355 or 866.620.0202.

### **Resources**

Indiana University Health EAP: Free, short-term, confidential counseling. Counseling is offered at convenient locations throughout the state. Call for an appointment at 317.962.8001 or 800.745.4838.

To learn more about depression, visit these online resources:

- IU Health Behavioral Health Resources: [iuhealth.org/behavioral-health/](http://iuhealth.org/behavioral-health/)
- Mental Health America: [mentalhealthamerica.net](http://mentalhealthamerica.net)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [nami.org](http://nami.org)
- Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs: [afsp.org](http://afsp.org)
- Crisis and Suicide Intervention Service: [mhaindy.net/crisisandsuicideintervention/](http://mhaindy.net/crisisandsuicideintervention/)

*\*Sources: National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control*



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