

## Depression

Depression is a potentially severe disease. It is not merely a feeling of being very sad but a disruption of how the brain functions, and it is estimated that a third of people will suffer from it at some point in their lives. As well as feelings of sadness and hopelessness, its symptoms include a loss of both mental and physical energy. It thus becomes hard to do or enjoy almost any activity, which makes the feelings of hopelessness worse. It can also make it hard to sleep or eat normally and difficult to socialise with other people.

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Some people can be treated with medication, but, for many others, the most effective treatment is to participate in physical or social activity – the same activities that depression makes difficult. A person with depression is therefore not merely sad or not trying hard enough, they are struggling with a serious disorder. It has been compared to paralysis; just as a person who cannot walk needs more help and support than just being told to walk, so a person with depression needs more help than just being told to be happy.

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What is depression?

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How many people will suffer from depression in their lives?

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How can depression be treated?