

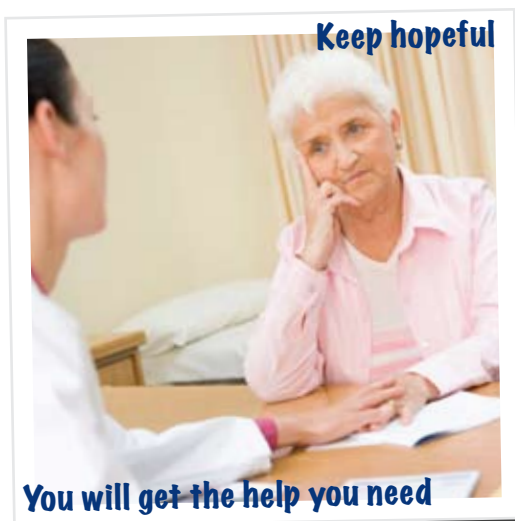
We all feel down from time to time; it is part of life. But when the feeling of upset won't go away and you start to lose interest in the things you enjoy, then it may be a sign of depression.

The earlier it is detected the easier it can be to treat, so learning to spot the warning signs is important.

The trouble is that many older people don't get the help they need because they dismiss the symptoms as "expected" and "inevitable".

Depression is common in later life but it's not a normal part of ageing. It's just that changes that are more likely to affect us as we get older (such as bereavement or poor health) can trigger it. It can be treated – whatever your age – and there is a range of therapies that can help.

If you suspect that you, or someone close to you, may be depressed, book an appointment with your GP or practice nurse and take this leaflet along to help start the discussion.



Contact us

Many Age Concerns provide a range of services that support older people such as:

- ◆ Information and advice
- ◆ Day centres and lunch clubs
- ◆ Befriending schemes
- ◆ Bereavement support
- ◆ Transport to activities
- ◆ Exercise programmes
- ◆ A benefits check

For more information please contact our free National Information Line on 0800 00 99 66, or your local Age Concern.

Your local Age Concern

AGE
Concern

"Down, but not out" campaign
Age Concern England, Astral House,
1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER
Phone: 020 8765 7200
Email: dbno@ace.org.uk
<http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/downbutnotout>
Registered Charity no 261794

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Spotting the signs of depression



AGE
Concern

Spotting the signs of depression

What causes depression?

You can become depressed for no obvious reason or it can be triggered by a distressing life event, often connected with loss:

- ◆ loss of a loved one
- ◆ loss of good health/mobility
- ◆ loss of familiar surroundings
- ◆ loss of independence.



You may be more at risk of depression if you:

- ◆ have suffered a serious health problem such as a stroke, heart attack, cancer
- ◆ have an illness or disability that affects the way you live or makes it hard to leave the house
- ◆ suffer from chronic pain like arthritis, leg ulcers or troubles with joints like hips and knees
- ◆ have lost sight or hearing
- ◆ feel lonely or isolated
- ◆ have moved to a care home
- ◆ have been admitted to hospital
- ◆ have money worries
- ◆ drink heavily
- ◆ take medications with depressive side-effects.

Symptoms of depression

Depression affects people differently, but these are some of the common signs.

Do you:

- Feel unhappy most of the time
- Worry a lot or feel anxious or panicky
- Get restless and irritable
- Feel life is pointless and not worth living
- Get very lonely or bored
- Cry a lot for no apparent reason
- Not care how you look
- Sleep too much or too little
- Feel tired even when you're not doing much
- Find it a struggle to do simple chores
- Have difficulty remembering things
- Find it hard to make decisions
- Dwell on things that happened in the past
- Have unexplained aches and pains
- Worry that you are seriously ill

Have you:

- Lost interest in life and things you used to enjoy
- Withdrawn from family and friends
- Lost confidence in yourself
- Lost your appetite or lost weight
- Had thoughts of harming yourself

Getting help

If you have experienced some of these symptoms for more than two weeks or suspect that you may be depressed, go straight to your GP or practice nurse for advice and take this checklist with you.



Family & friends

Have you noticed that your older relative or friend isn't quite their old self? Perhaps they are unhappy or just more anxious, irritable, moody or quieter than they once were?

You are in the best position to spot the early warning signs of depression. Keep in mind that they can be hidden behind a smiling face.

Clues could be:

- ◆ Little joy or pleasure in your visit
- ◆ Declining social invitations; avoiding calls
- ◆ A significant change in routine
- ◆ Neglecting appearance/personal hygiene
- ◆ Moving more slowly than usual
- ◆ Wringing their hands, pacing the room
- ◆ Complaining of feeling old or worthless
- ◆ Not eating properly (empty cupboards/fridge)
- ◆ Not keeping up with household chores
- ◆ Missing important medications
- ◆ Forgetting birthdays and anniversaries
- ◆ Putting their affairs in order (making/changing wills, planning funerals, settling bills).