

Teens and Depression

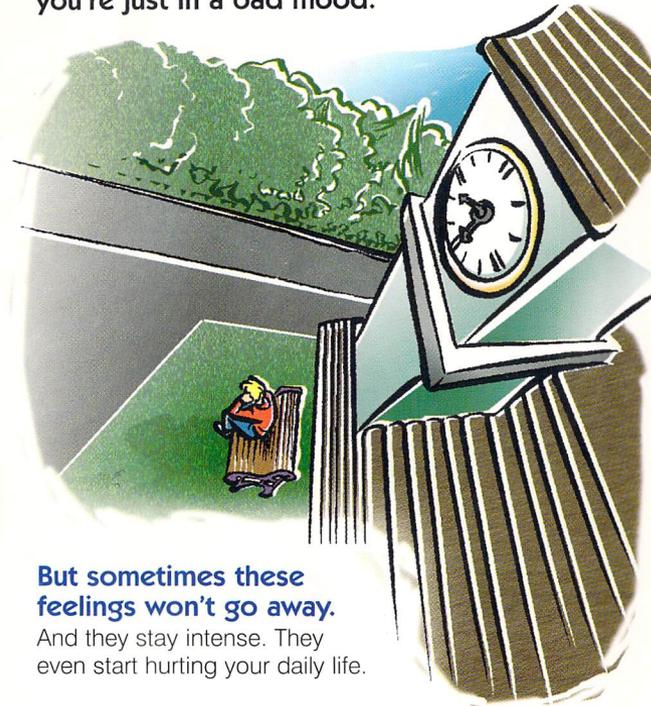
BEYOND THE BLUES

—Get the facts
about depression



Everybody feels down from time to time.

Like, maybe you bombed a test.
Or lost the big game. Or, hey—maybe
you're just in a bad mood.



But sometimes these feelings won't go away.

And they stay intense. They
even start hurting your daily life.

When this happens, you could have more than just the blues.

You could have a mental illness called depression.
When these low feelings alternate with extreme
“high” ones, they may signal a form of depression
called bipolar disorder (manic depression).

Depression affects the brain —your body's most important organ.

Depression affects the way you think, feel and act.
It can also have physical effects.

But depression can be treated!



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“Mental illness? You mean crazy, right?”

Wrong. Depression and other mental
illnesses are just that—illnesses. Much
like asthma or diabetes.

Depression can strike anyone —just like any other illness.

It affects millions of people, including children,
teens and adults of all ages. Male and female.
All races. All backgrounds. Anyone. And like
many other illnesses, it's treatable.



Ever heard of Abraham Lincoln?

Well, guess what—this great mind
and historical figure is believed to have had
depression. So are a lot of other people you've
learned about in school or heard about in the news.

Sometimes people judge or fear things they don't understand. So let's shed some light on the subject.

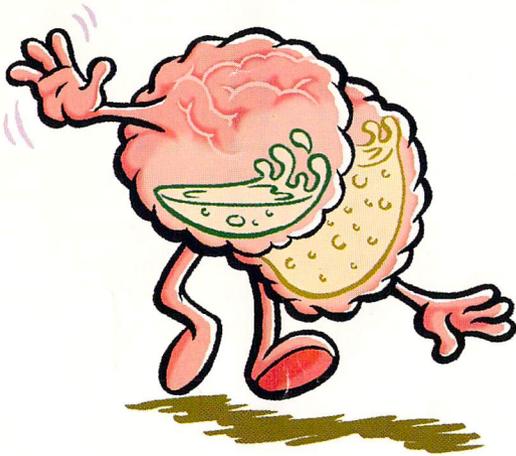
This folder gives only basic facts about depression.
Be sure to talk with your doctor, nurse or other
health-care provider about all of your health needs.

How does somebody develop depression?

No one knows the exact cause. But a lot of factors can contribute to depression.

There is often a chemical imbalance in the brain.

The person may have too little or too much of certain brain chemicals. This can result in depression.



Depression can run in families.

If a family member has had depression, you may be more likely to have it at some point, too.

A major change or loss can trigger depression.

This includes events like:

- the death of a family member or friend
- a breakup of a relationship
- moving or changing schools
- family changes
- getting a serious physical illness.

Depression can also start for no clear reason at all.

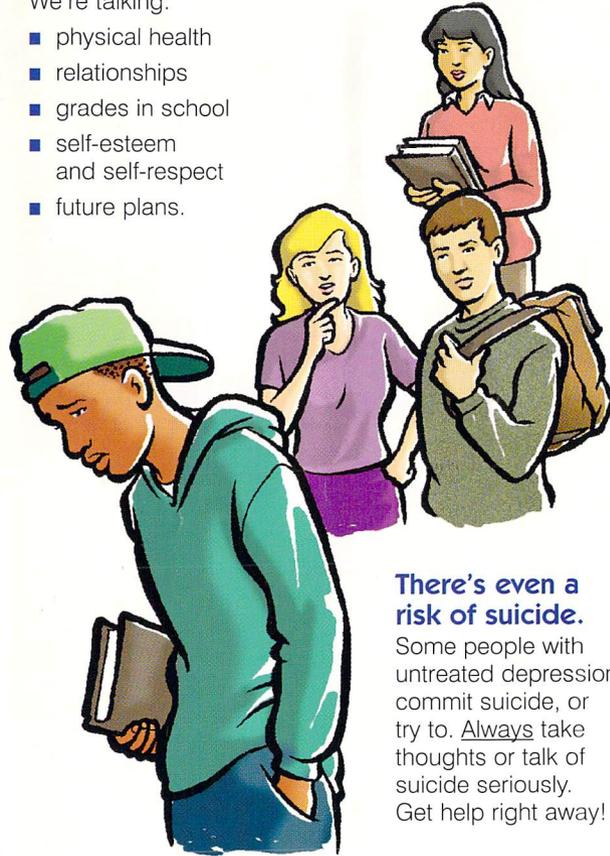
Depression can lead to major problems.

That's why treatment is so important.

Without treatment, everything in a person's life can suffer.

We're talking:

- physical health
- relationships
- grades in school
- self-esteem and self-respect
- future plans.



There's even a risk of suicide.

Some people with untreated depression commit suicide, or try to. Always take thoughts or talk of suicide seriously. Get help right away!

Some people may turn to alcohol or other drugs if they feel depressed.

Bad idea—this just makes existing problems worse and can lead to new ones.

Always remember that help is out there.

Questions and answers

“How can I tell if it's really depression?”

These signs could signal depression:

- lasting or strong sadness or hopelessness
- avoiding friends or having little interest in usual activities
- changes in eating or sleeping habits
- trouble concentrating
- extreme personality changes
- not caring how you look
- aches and pains for no clear reason
- thoughts of death or suicide.

Signs of bipolar disorder also include mania (very high energy, racing thoughts, taking risks, etc.).



“Can't I just cheer up my friend?”

You can listen to your friend. Encourage him or her to seek help. But you can't make your friend well. Remember—depression requires professional treatment.

“What does ‘treatment’ mean?”

It usually involves psychotherapy, medication or both. Only a health-care provider can plan the best treatment. But treatment can change—even save—a life!

So those are the facts.

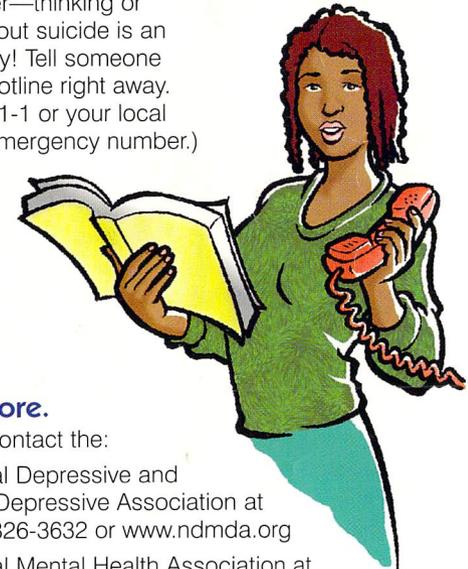
Remind you of yourself or someone you know?

If so, get help.

Talk to:

- a trusted adult
- a school counselor
- your health-care provider or a mental health professional—check the yellow pages under “Mental Health Services.”

Remember—thinking or talking about suicide is an emergency! Tell someone or call a hotline right away. (Or call 9-1-1 or your local medical emergency number.)



Learn more.

You can contact the:

- National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association at 1-800-826-3632 or www.ndmda.org
- National Mental Health Association at 1-800-969-NMHA (1-800-969-6642) or www.nmha.org
- National Institute of Mental Health at 1-800-421-4211 or www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) at 1-800-950-NAMI (1-800-950-6264) or www.nami.org.

Know when to get help for depression. You can help turn a life around!