

Depression

What Is Depression?

Depression is a common illness that affects millions of Americans each year. However, many people fail to get treatment because they are afraid to talk about their symptoms with their doctor. Some people have the mistaken idea that depression is a sign of weakness or is a problem that will go away on its own. We now know that depression is a medical condition just like high blood pressure or diabetes, and it needs to be treated seriously.

Research shows that people who are depressed may have more problems with their general health if their depression is not treated. The good news is that there are many good choices of medications that treat depression effectively with very few side effects. Medications must be taken daily, and improvement of depressive symptoms is expected within a few weeks.

Many people fear that these medications for depression are habit forming or that they may become addicted to them. This is not true, and most people may need to take them for only a year or less.

What Are Common Signs of Depression?

Here are some of the most common signs of depression. If you have experienced any of them in the last two weeks, you should talk with your doctor.

- Have you felt sad or blue?
- Have you felt tired or without energy?
- Have you found it hard to concentrate, remember things or make decisions?
- Have you lost interest in activities that you usually enjoy?
- Have you been sleeping too much or too little?
- Have you either lost or gained weight?
- Have you been feeling guilty or worthless?