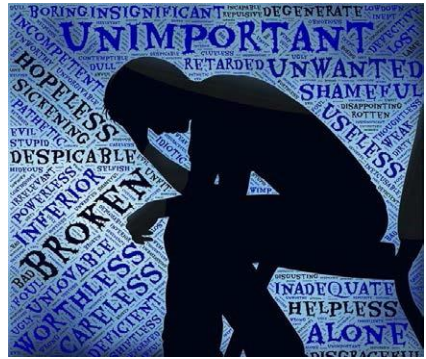


# Depression

Depression occurs when negative emotions, such as anger, grief or frustration make it difficult for the affected person to do the things they would otherwise enjoy doing in everyday life. A person is said to be depressed if he/she has been feeling miserable for at least two weeks, or even as long as twenty weeks.



Although everyone experiences sadness from time to time, depression lasts longer and interferes with daily life. It is one of the most common illnesses that often go undiagnosed. Depression can be mild, moderate or severe. You may have a single episode of depression or suffer from long term depression that either comes back or lasts a long time (more than two years).

If you have ever had the misfortune of experiencing mood disorders, anxiety and depression, you may have heard these words often, “Don’t worry, things will improve” and, “It’s not as bad as you think.” Unless you have actually experienced depression, you can’t understand what it feels like.

## Types:

Depending on its causes, depression is classified as primary and other common forms of depression. The primary types of depression include:

**Chronic depression (Dysthymia):** A long-lasting, less severe form of depression. People with dysthymia have a greater risk of major depression.

**Atypical depression:** Unlike those suffering from major depression, people with atypical depression can feel better for a while when something good happens. In addition, people with atypical depression have different symptoms than those with major depression. Despite its name, atypical depression may be the most common type of depression.

**Major depression:** A constant sense of hopelessness and despair is the sign of major depression, also known as clinical depression. People who suffer from this find it difficult to work, study, sleep, eat and enjoy any activities.



**Adjustment disorder:** This disorder can develop in response to a major life event, such as death of a loved one, which may lead to symptoms of depression.

**Postpartum depression:** Nearly 10% of mothers may feel depressed after giving birth.

**Premenstrual Dysphonic Disorder (PDD):** Women with PDD experience symptoms of depression one week before getting their period, which go away after their period is over.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** This kind of depression is seasonal and happens when there is less sunlight. It starts during fall-winter and disappears during spring-summer.

**Bipolar disorder:** People with bipolar disorder, also called manic-depressive disorder, have moods that swing from depression to mania.

## **Causes**

Depression may be caused by a combination of physical, genetic and environmental factors, including:

- **Heredity;** a gene called SERT that controls the brain chemical serotonin has been linked to depression. In addition, some studies show that people with depressed family members are more likely to be depressed themselves
- **Changes in the brain;** some people with depression may have physical changes in their brains
- **Long-term stress;** resulting from loss, abuse or being deprived as a child
- **Light problems;** constant exposure to low levels of light, as in the case of SAD

- **Sleep problems;** unable to have a sound sleep for long durations
- **Social isolation;** unable to adjust/adapt with the society
- **Vitamin deficiency;** not getting sufficient amounts of certain vitamins and minerals
- **Diseases;** serious medical conditions, such as heart attack or cancer
- **Medications;** certain medications, including those for high blood pressure, high cholesterol or irregular heartbeat
- **Gall bladder removal;** depression is common among individuals who have had their gallbladder removed or have stones in their gallbladder

## **Symptoms**

Symptoms of depression may include the following:

- Difficulty in concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Feeling constantly drained out due to fatigue and low energy levels
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness or excessive sleeping
- Irritability, restlessness and inability to concentrate
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Persistent sad, anxious or 'empty' feelings
- Thoughts of suicide, or suicide attempts
- Inability to make any decision
- Obvious weight loss or gain

# Depression Cleanse

Depression is the common cold of mental disorders, most people will be affected by depression in their lives either directly or indirectly, through a friend or family member. However, it can not be cured if proper care is not taken.

## Depression Cleanse Methods

### 1. Eat a 'happy' diet

Eating healthy can help with mood in general, but there are some foods that can help with production of serotonin, a chemical in the brain that contributes to feeling happy. Foods that can naturally enhance levels of serotonin include fish-oil rich in Omega-3 fatty acids; healthy fat, such as coconut oil, flaxseed oil and sour cherries; and eggs.

### 2. Drink green tea

Though green tea contains caffeine, it has an extremely important constituent called L-theanine. L-theanine works synergistically with caffeine to boost mood in such a way that you don't experience a crash-effect. With psychoactive properties, it is able



to cross the blood-brain barrier and has been shown to reduce stress as well as boost dopamine as well as the brain inhibitory transmitter GABA.

So, drink a cup of hot and fresh green tea along with your breakfast regularly.

### 3. Drink chamomile tea

Depression goes hand in hand with sleep problems. You can't get out of bed during the day, but can't fall asleep at night either. It is believed that a particular flavonoid (a chemical naturally occurring in some plants) in chamomile is what contributes to its relaxing properties. A cup of chamomile tea before bedtime with a bit of milk and honey helps unwind. For an extra boost of

relaxation, tuck a little lavender sleep sachet under your pillow and you will be able to sleep even better.

Boil a cup of water and add two teaspoons of dried chamomile. Let it steep for 5 minutes. Add a little milk and honey if you like, and drink it 30 minutes before bedtime.

#### **4. Supplement with St. John's wort**

A popular home remedy for depression, St. John's wort is an herbaceous plant/shrub that has been used to treat various nervous disorders since ages. It is most effective in cases of mild to moderate depression. One of its main constituents called hypericin is believed to be responsible for its effectiveness. Hypericin appears to affect various neurotransmitters the same way as serotonin reuptake inhibitors do. There are several other components of St. John's wort that may contribute to the antidepressant effects, but hypericin is the most widely recognised.

#### **5. Increase B-vitamins**

The B-vitamins (mainly B-12) play an important role in the brain; of producing chemicals (serotonin, dopamine and epinephrine) that majorly impact our mood. If you lack this all-important vitamin, your mind as well as your body may be adversely affected. Vegetarians and older adults, especially those with digestive disorders, may find it difficult to get enough B-vitamins as they are mainly found in meat. You can either take supplements or add more B-vitamin rich food to your diet, such as fish (Mackerel), cheese, shellfish, spinach, bell peppers and turkey.

#### **6. Load up on pumpkin seeds**

Pumpkin seeds contain healthy fats and magnesium, both of which can help lighten your mood. They also contain L-tryptophan, an amino acid involved in the production of serotonin.



Eat a cup of pumpkin seeds once a day.

## Guidelines for treating depression

### See a counsellor

A counsellor will be able to tell you if you need medical help or not. It's amazing how quickly talking about your depression with a professional counsellor can uncover things that may seem obvious later, but are impossible to recognize in moments of darkness.

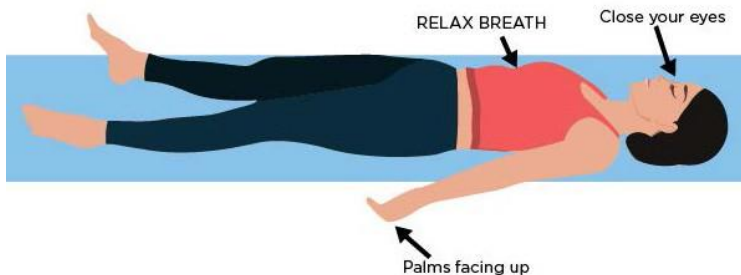
### Meditation

Meditation can help promote relaxation and has been found helpful in treating depression. Meditation helps in creating a balance in the nervous system. This enables the glands to return to a state of hormonal balance and help the individual overcome depression. The person must gain control over his nervous system, and channelise



this mental and emotional activities toward restful harmonious vibrations. This can be aided by ensuring sufficient rest and sleep under the right conditions.

The best method of relaxation is to practice shavasana.



**Shavasana process**

## Yoga

Yoga involves meditation, along with physical postures, breathing techniques and relaxation. Yoga practices vary, and some may not be recommended to people with certain medical conditions.

Yogasanas, such as Surya Namaskar, Vakrasana, Halasan, Paschimotanasana, Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Sarvangasana and Shavasana, and Pranayamas, such as Kapalbhathi, Anuloma-Viloma and Bhastrika are highly beneficial in the treatment of depression.

### **Music Therapy**

Music therapy has been shown to be an effective non-drug approach for people of all ages. It assists in reducing fear, anxiety, stress and grief. Music can be thought of as a natural tranquiliser for the human spirit. Following are ancient Indian classical ragas found to be soothing to the mind:



1. Raag darbari – for mind concentration and overcoming grief
2. Puria kalyan – for relief from anxiety
3. Puria – for curing various phobias
4. Kedar – for treating insomnia, memory impairment and mental retardation
5. Bhairvi – for treating insomnia
6. Sham kalyan – for controlling anger
7. Raag kedar bihag – for treating insomnia

### **Massage**

Massage uses touch to help provide relaxation. Most touch-therapies are based on the premises that the mind and body are interconnected, and that physical health and emotional well-being are closely linked. The belief is that when the body is relaxed the mind contributes to better health, less depression and overall well-being.





## **Exercise**

Exercise produces chemical and psychological changes in the brain that improve blood circulation and may elevate your beta-endorphin (mood-affecting brain chemicals). It not only keeps the body physically and mentally fit, but also provides recreation and mental relaxation. It is nature's best tranquiliser. Exercise gives a feeling of accomplishment and thus, reduces the sense of helplessness. Exercise temporarily boosts feel-good chemicals called endorphins. It may also have long-term benefits for people with depression.

On the other hand, some people, suffering from depression, find it almost impossible to get motivated enough to start a regular exercise routine. If you'd like to try exercise as a means of fighting your depression, but just can't seem to work up the will to do it, talk to a trusted friend or loved one and ask them to help you get started.

Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, three times a week to begin to feel a sustained effect on your mood. It may take a few weeks to really notice a change.

## **Get enough sleep**

Depression can make it hard to get enough sleep and lack of sufficient sleep can make depression worse. What can you do? Start by making small changes to your lifestyle. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Try not to nap. Take all the distractions out of your bedroom; no computer and no TV. In time, you may find your sleep improving.





People who cleanse their liver regularly report experiencing greater mental clarity and balanced moods. A Liver Cleanse helps the body create healthy brain chemicals more efficiently. Powerful nutritional replenishments can also support this process. I have found Live Cleanse to be highly recommendable in treating depression.

### **Get some sunshine**

Lack of sufficient sunshine is the reason behind Seasonal Affective Depression (SAD).

Your body naturally produces vitamin D, known to help combat depression and mood swings, when your skin is exposed to the sun. Make a commitment to expose yourself to sunshine for at least 15 or 20 minutes a day whenever you have the chance.



