

Depression:

How to Treat It?

The following information is from the National Institute of Mental Health, pamphlet 00-3561, developed for use by the general public, and is not intended as medical/clinical advice or treatment. If you feel that you may have symptoms of depression, you should consult our doctor or a behavioral health professional. Only your health care provider can make a diagnosis or recommend a treatment plan. For more information about your behavioral health benefits, you can call the member services or behavioral health telephone number listed on the back of your CIGNA HealthCare identification card.

The first step to getting the right treatment for depression is a physical examination by a physician. A good doctor's exam will include a complete history of your feelings of depression, such as, when they started, how long they have lasted, how are they affecting your life-style, and whether these feelings have happened before. If these feelings have happened before, the doctor will want to know if you saw a doctor at that time and if so what that doctor suggested. There are many medications that can be used to treat depression and counseling can also help with depression. Most people do best using both medication prescribed by a doctor and seeing someone for regular counseling. Medication can assist with helping someone start to feel better faster and counseling can help in learning better ways to deal with life's problems.

When taking medications, patients often stop taking the medicine too soon. They may feel better and they think they no longer need the medicine. Or they may think the medication isn't helping at all. It is important to keep taking medication until it has a chance to work. If side effects happen before the person starts feeling better, they should talk with their doctor about how they are feeling before stopping the medication. The doctor can help with the side effects and may even need to change the medication. Once a person is feeling better, it is important to continue the medication for 4 to 9 months to make sure that the feelings of depression do not come back.

The medications side effects that someone might have:

- Headache, most of the time this will go away
- Nausea, if this happens it should not last long after taking the medication
- Nervousness and sleep problems (trouble falling asleep or waking often during the night); this might happen during the first few weeks and your doctor will be able to help you with these problems
- Feeling nervous if this happens for the first time after the drug is taken and lasts several days you should call your doctor
- Change in feelings about sex, you should talk with your doctor about these feelings if they are worrying you

Help is Here.



CIGNA HealthCare