

Self-Assessment

Have you had either of the following symptoms nearly every day for *at least two weeks*?

1. *Have you been sad, blue, or down in the dumps?*
2. *Have you lost interest or pleasure in all or almost all the things you usually do (work, family, leisure, activities)?*

If either 1 or 2 is true, continue. If not, you probably do not have a depressive illness.

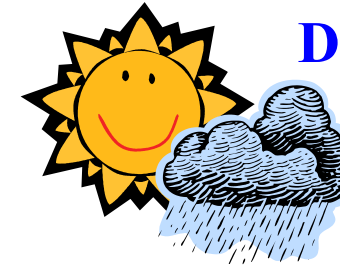
Have you had either of the following symptoms nearly every day for *at least two weeks*?

1. *A poor appetite, or overeating?*
2. *Insomnia?*
3. *Oversleeping? (Going to bed earlier or staying in bed longer)*
4. *Do you have low energy, fatigue, or chronic tiredness?*
5. *Do you avoid other people?*
6. *Are you less active or talkative than usual or do you feel slowed down or restless?*

7. *Do you lose interest or enjoyment in sex and other pleasurable activities?*
8. *Do you fail to experience pleasure when you are praised, given presents, promoted, etc.?*
9. *Are you less efficient or do you accomplish less at work or home?*
10. *Do you feel less able to cope with the routine of everyday life?*
11. *Do you find that your concentration is poor, or that you have difficulty making decisions?*
12. *Do you feel you lose self-esteem, or you have become self-critical?*

If you have answered *Yes* to the earlier two questions, and *Yes* to any four of these 12 questions, you probably have a depressive illness and should seek professional help. Even if you have only two or three symptoms, you should seriously consider seeking help.

For more information please go to our website at <http://christ-education.blogspot.com.au>



Depression

What is Depression?

Depression is known as a mood disorder. It can cause one to feel "down" or sad. Some depressed people often feel like crying for no apparent reason. Depression, like anxiety, can cause one to feel a decreased ability to enjoy life. Sighing and a feeling of listlessness are often seen in those who are mildly or moderately depressed. Pessimism is very often a sign of depression.

More severe depression can interrupt one's sleep or appetite, make one agitated and even cause a slowing of movement eg. walking, talking, thinking, etc. In extreme depression one may become virtually incapacitated - unable to get out of bed, eat or to take any action to complete tasks one has to do. Depression is a major cause of "underachieving."

It is usually assumed that there are two forms of depression. *Endogenous depression* is thought to be caused internally by a chemical malfunction in the brain. *Exogenous depression* is caused by some external event that has had a severely disruptive effect such as a death of a loved one or a divorce. A psychological cause, if you will. Both causes can occur together.

It is virtually universally agreed that psychotherapy is the treatment of choice for depression. In the case of bereavement, grief counseling can be very beneficial. Sometimes antidepressant drugs or similar depression medication is prescribed which can help the patient to mobilize him or herself and make psychotherapy accessible, even in elderly depression. In all cases, the depressed mood eventually affects the personality of the patient which is why psychotherapy is recommended.

If you suspect that you or someone you know is depressed try the following quick test:

1. Do you frequently feel fatigued when there is no physical reason that you know of?
2. Do you frequently feel sad or down?
3. Do you cry or feel on the verge of crying often and for no apparent reason?
4. Is life "hard" or you wished to be dead?
5. Do you find that you sleep a lot longer than you used to or that you feel fatigued or drowsy during the day?

If you answer yes to any two of the above questions you may want to consider the possibility that you suffer from depression.

What can you do?

If you suffer from severe depression see a doctor and medical help.

For mild depressions seek the help of a Christian counsellor.

Have a good and balanced diet. Low in fat and high in fibre.

Walk at least one hour every day outside in fresh air and rest sometimes.

Daily Journaling is a very useful tool. Record your daily mood / self-talk.

Attempt to get to the roots of the depression - death, divorce, marriage - and deal with it. Deal with guilt, unbelief, anger, resentment and self-pity.

Build self-esteem and self-acceptance. Change false beliefs like I'm no good, my life isn't worth living, my future is without hope,

Don't sit in dark rooms. Use good lighting and bright and uplifting colours.

Find a prayer partner who will support you in prayer and checks up on you on a daily basis.

Ask the elders of your church to anoint you with oil and pray for healing.

Is Depression a Sin?

Depression in itself cannot be regarded as sin, nor is it due always to spiritual causes. This is contrary to what some authorities teach.

Many great men of God suffered from it such as Job (Job 3:1-11), Moses (Numbers 11:10-15), Elijah (1 King 19:4), Jonah (Jonah 4:3), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:10-18).



"Portrait Du Dr Gachet"
by Vincent van Gogh

In more recent times Martin Luther, John Bunyan, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, William Cowper, J.B. Phillips, and the preachers, Alexander Whyte, Andrew Bonar, and Campbell Morgan also struggled with depression.

Also often associated with depression are resentment and self-pity. Anger is a big issue and is usually repressed. Depression is said to be, *anger turned inward, frozen anger and anger without enthusiasm.*

However, some factors associated with depression, are sinful such as self-pity, unbelief, unconfessed sin, unresolved anger and resentment.