

Depression and diabetes:

know the signs, know there's help

What are the signs?

Feeling sad, hopeless, worthless, or guilty

Loss of interest in things you used to like

Sleeping too much or not being able to sleep at all

Eating too much or not eating enough

Trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions

Loss of energy

Thoughts of death or suicide

If you've had 5 or more of these symptoms for more than 2 weeks, you may have depression. Talk to your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

Adjusting to diabetes can have a huge impact on your life. To stay healthy, you need to monitor your blood sugar every day. You have to make sure you eat right, exercise, and take your diabetes medication as directed by your doctor. You also need regular doctor checkups.

All of these changes can be very hard. You might feel that your life is controlled by this disease. You may even feel sad. It's okay to feel that way for a little while—as long as you can get over it and continue to take charge of your life. But when that sadness does not fade, it could be something serious called depression.

What is depression?

Everybody gets sad from time to time. But for most people, that feeling fades and they feel okay again. Depression is a feeling of sadness that never goes away. Depression affects a person's thoughts and feelings, and the ability to get through the day. It's a feeling that nothing matters and that life has little meaning.

Depression can happen to anyone.

You do not need to have diabetes to get it. But if you have diabetes, depression can add to your problems. Studies show that people with diabetes are more likely to develop depression. So, it's something you need to watch out for.



Why is depression bad for people with diabetes?

Depression can zap a person's motivation. For people with diabetes, this can be very dangerous because they have to stay motivated to take care of themselves. They have to be sure to check their blood sugar, take their medication as directed, and eat right. When people have depression, they may not be motivated to do these things. They may not care about checking their blood sugar. They may not try to eat right. They might not even eat at all! Taking their medication as they should can also be very hard for people with depression.

And people who are not controlling their diabetes can do damage to their eyes, kidneys, heart, and nerves.

I think I'm suffering from depression.

If you think you might have depression, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to your healthcare provider. Poor blood sugar control can cause symptoms that look and feel like depression. Your healthcare provider will want to rule this out and give you a complete checkup before treating you for depression.

There are many ways to make depression better, including therapy and medication. But your treatment must be chosen by a trained professional.

Your healthcare provider may recommend that you talk about your feelings with another professional who is specially trained to help you get through your depression. Or, your healthcare provider may recommend medication, with or without talk therapy.

Getting the right treatment can make you feel better and help you control your diabetes.

If you think you may have depression, do not wait to get help. Talk to your healthcare provider today. Your healthy future depends on it.

For more information, you can visit the following websites:

www.depression-screening.org

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.nmha.org

For more information, visit MerckSource™ at www.mercksource.com.

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