

# The Facts About Depression

## Percent of Population That Will Experience Depression in Their Lifetime

Men = 10 percent

Women = 20 percent

### Symptoms of Depression\*

- ▶ You no longer enjoy things like you once did.
- ▶ You can't fall asleep, or you wake up and can't go back to sleep.
- ▶ You feel tired during the day.
- ▶ You no longer enjoy food.
- ▶ You find yourself eating more or less than usual.
- ▶ You have gained or lost weight without trying.
- ▶ You have a hard time concentrating.
- ▶ You find it hard to sit still.
- ▶ You cannot make even simple decisions.
- ▶ You feel guilty or bad about yourself.
- ▶ You feel people would be better off without you.
- ▶ You think about suicide or about ways to hurt yourself.

*\*If any of these symptoms apply or if you have been feeling sad or hopeless for more than a few weeks, seek help from your doctor.*

## Getting Your Health and Life Back on Track

### 1. See Your Primary Doctor First

- ▶ Rule out physical causes of depression-like symptoms such as:
  - Drinking too much alcohol
  - Side effect of medication
  - Thyroid disorder
  - Electrolyte imbalance
  - Anemia (iron, folate, and vitamin B12 deficiencies)

## 2. Lift Your Spirits

- ▶ Join a support group
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Talk to family or friend(s)
- ▶ Keep a journal of the good things that happen each day
- ▶ Plan to do something that you enjoy every day
- ▶ Volunteer/help others

## 3. See a Specialist for Help

- ▶ Psychologist
- ▶ Psychiatric nurse
- ▶ Social worker
- ▶ Certified or licensed professional counselor
- ▶ Psychiatrist

## 4. Antidepressants\*

- ▶ Use alone
- ▶ Use along with therapy
- ▶ Combat chemical imbalances
- ▶ Restore normal brain chemistry

\*Some antidepressants may interfere with other medications.

## Lift Your Spirits

**Join a support group.** Share your thoughts and feelings with others who also have the disease. Learn new skills to cope better.

**Exercise.** Just moving can work wonders for the way you feel.

**Talk to family or friend(s).** Sharing your feelings can help release built-up emotions. Get their support for needed changes.

**Keep a journal of the good things in life and other thoughts.** Write down a poem or prayer that has meaning to you. Write out the many blessings that happen each day. Go back and read these things whenever you're feeling blue.

**Plan an enjoyable day doing something you love.**

Go shopping, work in the garden, go for a walk in the park, or have lunch with friends.

**Volunteer/help others.** Volunteering helps us feel good about ourselves, that we're making a difference in someone else's life.