



TIPS

for Dealing With Depression

Depression, a potentially serious medical condition in which a person feels hopeless, sad, and unimportant, can sometimes accompany chronic illness. Depression can interfere with a person's ability to cope with normal, everyday life, but it doesn't have to. Follow these tips, and you just may feel more upbeat and less glum.

- ❑ **Don't go it alone.** You can greatly benefit from being in the company of those who feel the same way you do by joining a support group. Also, you can share your experiences, encourage each other, and give and get advice on how to cope with depression, which affects more than 120 million people worldwide.
- ❑ **Get out, get social.** Even though you might feel like staying indoors, it helps to get out and about. Go to places where people may share your same interests. You could also visit public places such as malls, museums, and parks.
- ❑ **Mealtime is a must.** Skipping meals can cause you to feel fatigued and irritable. Evidence also suggests that foods containing folic acid and omega-3 fatty acids can help ease depression.
- ❑ **Get adequate amounts of sleep.** Having depression may make it difficult to sleep, but going to bed at the same time every night and removing distractions from your bedroom, such as your TV, telephone, or computer, may help you get the restorative rest you need.
- ❑ **Spend time with pets.** Caring for a pet can prove to be worthwhile. They may add companionship and joy to your life, help you feel less isolated, give you a sense of being needed, and allow you to focus on something other than your current situation.
- ❑ **Take full advantage of the sun.** Sunlight is needed, because without it your depression has the potential to worsen. Getting at least 15 minutes of sunlight a day may greatly boost your mood.
- ❑ **Stretch those muscles.** Being depressed can cause your energy levels to plummet; this is all the more reason to exercise, by walking a few times each week. Exercise releases endorphins in your brain, too.
- ❑ **Lighten the mood with a little fun.** Set aside time for the things that you enjoy, which may include watching a funny movie or your favorite sitcom. Anything that makes you smile or laugh can help convince the brain that you are happy.
- ❑ **Seek professional help.** If, despite your best efforts, you find depression getting the better of you, there is no shame in seeking professional help. Asking for help is a brave act. Therapy and/or drugs may help you overcome depression.

This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at info@neurologyreviews.com.

Tips for Patients are available for download at www.neurologyreviews.com.

