

Major Depressive Disorder

By: Chelsea Brown



What is Major Depressive Disorder?

- Major depressive disorder is when a person has five or more symptoms of depression for at least 2 consecutive weeks.

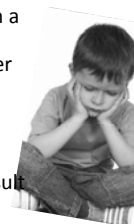


Signs & Symptoms

- Presence of at least 5 of the following symptoms during a consecutive 2 week period:
 - Agitation, restlessness, and irritability
 - Dramatic change in appetite, often with weight gain or loss
 - Extreme difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly
 - Fatigue and lack of energy
 - Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
 - Feelings of worthlessness, self-hate, and inappropriate guilt
 - Inactivity and withdrawal from usual activities, a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed
 - Thoughts of death or suicide
 - Trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping
 - Psychotic symptoms, such as delusions or hallucinations
- Significant distress or impairment

What causes it?

- Many researchers believe it is caused by chemical imbalances in the brain, which may be hereditary or caused by events in a person's life.
- Stressful life changes or events can trigger depression in some people.
- Men and women of all ages, races, and economic levels can have depression.
- Women are especially vulnerable to depression after giving birth. This is a result of hormonal and physical changes. Although new mothers commonly experience temporary "blues," depression that lasts longer than 2 - 3 weeks is not normal and requires treatment.



Can Major Depressive Disorder be treated?

- Depression can be treated in a variety of ways, particularly with *medications, therapy, and counseling*. Most people benefit from a combination of the three treatments.
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a treatment that causes a seizure by means of an electrical current. ECT may improve the mood of severely depressed or suicidal people who don't respond to other treatments.

Medications used to reduce depression:

- **Tricyclics:**
 - Tofranil
 - Elavil
 - Adaptin; Sinequan
 - Norpramin; Pertofane
 - Surmontil
 - Aventil; Pamelor
 - Vivacil
- **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors:**
 - Marplan
 - Nardil
 - Parnate
 - Eldepril
- **Anti-depressant Drugs (second generation):**
 - Prozac
 - Zoloft
 - Paxil
 - Effexor
 - Wellbutrin
 - Lexapro
 - Cymbalta
 - Anafranil



Types of Therapy

- **Interpersonal Therapy**
 - Interpersonal therapy (IPT) is a short-term psychotherapy, normally consisting of 12 to 16 weekly sessions.
 - It was developed specifically for the treatment of major depression, and focuses on correcting current social dysfunction.
 - Unlike psychoanalytic psychotherapy, it does not address unconscious phenomena, such as defense mechanisms or internal conflicts.
 - Instead, interpersonal therapy focuses primarily on the "here-and-now" factors that directly interfere with social relationships.

Types of Therapy (cont'd)

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**
 - The cognitive behavioral theory of depression states that the patient's excessive self-rejection and self-criticism causes major depression.
 - This therapy seeks to correct these negative thoughts or dysfunctional attitudes in order to overcome the patient's pessimism and hopelessness.
 - Homework assignments are given to break through the depressed patient's vicious cycle of increased negative thinking leading to increased social isolation which further increases the negative thinking.

Types of Therapy (cont'd)

- **Psychoanalytic Oriented Therapy:**
 - The psychoanalytic approach to treating major depression, unlike other psychotherapies.
 - It focuses on hypothesized unconscious phenomena, such as defense mechanisms or internal conflicts.
 - This approach to psychotherapy analyzes the historical reasons why the patient has "turned anger inwards against the self" in becoming depressed.
 - This focus on the patient's past is in direct contrast to the "here-and-now" focus of interpersonal therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy.
 - Psychoanalytic psychotherapy for major depression usually continues with one or more weekly visits for several years.
**Hence this form of psychotherapy is the most time-intensive and expensive of all the psychotherapies.

Types of Therapy (cont'd)

- **Family Therapy:**
 - Family therapy is not generally viewed as a primary therapy for the treatment of depression, but it is indicated for cases in which:
 - (1) the depression appears to be seriously jeopardizing the patient's marriage and family functioning
 - OR
 - (2) a patient's depression appears to be promoted and maintained by marital and family interaction patterns.
 - Family therapy examines the role of the depressed member in the overall psychological well-being of the whole family; it also examines the role of the entire family in the maintenance of the depression.
 - Patients with mood disorders have a very high rate of divorce, and approximately 50 percent of spouses report they would not have married the patient or had children had they known that the patient was going to have a mood disorder.
 - Family therapy, therefore, can be a crucial and effective modality in the treatment of mood disorders.

How do you diagnose major depressive disorder?

- Major depression is diagnosed if a person reports having five or more depressive symptoms for at least 2 weeks.
- Beck's Depression Scale Inventory or other screening tests for depression can be helpful in making the diagnosis.
- Before diagnosing depression, the health care provider should rule out medical conditions that can cause symptoms of depression.

Beck's Depression Scale Inventory

- **The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI, BDI-II):**
 - It was created by Dr. Aaron T. Beck
 - It is a 21-question multiple-choice self-report inventory, one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression.
 - Its development marked a shift among health care professionals, who had until then viewed depression from a psychodynamic perspective, instead of it being rooted in the patient's own thoughts.
 - In its current version the questionnaire is designed for individuals aged 13 and over, and is composed of items relating to symptoms of depression such as hopelessness and irritability, cognitions such as guilt or feelings of being punished, as well as physical symptoms such as fatigue, weight loss, and lack of interest in sex.
- **There are three versions of the BDI:**
 - The original BDI, first published in 1961 and later revised in 1978 as the BDI-1A, and the BDI-II, published in 1996. The BDI is widely used as an assessment tool by health care professionals and researchers in a variety of settings.

It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle!

☺ It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle while you are going through treatment for major depressive disorder.

You should:

- Avoid alcohol and drugs (which make depression worse and may interfere with medications)
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Get regular exercise and sleep
- Seek supportive relationships
- Learning how to relax and manage stress



☺ Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is also a great way to help prevent depression!

Prevention

- Counseling may help you through times of grief, stress, or low mood.
- Family therapy may be particularly important for teens who feel blue.
- The elderly, or others who feel socially isolated or lonely can try volunteering or getting involved in group activities.
- Medications and psychiatric counseling may prevent depression from returning. Some episodes of depression are not preventable.

You should contact your doctor if..

- You hear voices that are not there.
- You have frequent crying spells with little or no provocation.
- You have had feelings of depression that disrupt work, school, or family life for longer than 2 weeks.
- You think that one of your current medications may be making you feel depressed. DO NOT change or stop any medications without consulting your doctor.
- You believe that you should cut back on drinking, a family member or friend has asked you to cut back, you feel guilty about the amount of alcohol you drink, or you drink alcohol first thing in the morning.
- Call 911, a suicide hotline, or get safely to a nearby emergency room if you have thoughts of suicide, a suicidal plan, or thoughts of harming yourself or others.

Complications from this disorder may include:

- Suicide (up to 15% of people with major depressive disorder die by suicide)
- Increased risk of alcohol- and drug-related problems
- Increased risk of tobacco dependence
- Increased risk of problems with physical health and premature death due to medical illness
- May have increased pain and physical illness and decreased physical, social, and role functioning.

Video Clip on Major Depressive Disorder

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTXvWU258FM&feature=fvw#watch-main-area>

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