

Controlling your risk: Depression and heart risk

Depression is a risk factor for heart disease.

If you are feeling depressed, your risk of getting heart disease in the next 14 years may be 4 times higher.

Depression raises your stress hormone levels.

These hormones cause your...

- arteries to be stiffer.
- blood to clot faster.
- insulin and cholesterol levels to rise.
- blood pressure and heart rate to rise
- heart to work harder to pump blood.

Depression may cause you to...

- exercise less.
- forget things like taking your medication.
- be ill and take longer to recover from colds etc.
- withdraw from friends and family.

Get help. Depression is a medical problem.

Ignoring it will not make it go away.

- Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling.
- Exercise regularly, it is a good treatment for mild depression.
- Take any medications as directed.


If you are not feeling better after treatment, ask to see a clinical specialist.

How do you know if you are depressed? Ask yourself these questions...

- Have you felt sad, anxious, or had empty feelings lasting more than a few days?
- Are you sleeping too little or too much?
- Have you lost your appetite or are you eating more than usual?
- Have you lost interest in things that used to matter to you?
- Are you restless and irritable?
- Are you having physical symptoms that don't get better with treatment?
- Are you having problems concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- Are you tired all the time or have no energy?
- Do you feel guilty, hopeless, or worthless?
- Have you had thoughts about harming yourself, or suicide?

If you answered yes to any question

- Have these feeling lasted more than 2 weeks?
- Have you been able to maintain your normal daily routine?

 **You are at risk for depression** if you answered yes to five or more questions and your symptoms have lasted more than 2 weeks or your symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine. **If so, talk with your doctor soon!**