Prior to 2020, 6.5% of the U.S. population had symptoms of major depressive disorder (MDD). This increased to 21%-30% with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

MDD is a common mood disorder characterized by a two-week or longer period of depressed mood, a loss of interest or pleasure in most or all activities and at least three of the following symptoms:

- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Weight loss or gain
- Fatigue
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Reduced concentration
- Restlessness and anxiety or slower responses
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much

**RISK FACTORS FOR DEPRESSION**

**EXTERNAL FACTORS**
- Behavioral disorder
- Substance use

**INTERNAL FACTORS**
- Female sex
- Black, Hispanic, multiracial or other people of color
- Gender dysphoria
- Gender diverse identity
- Identifying as LGBTQIA+
- History of anxiety
- Low self-esteem

**NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS**
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Chronic medical conditions
- History of divorce
- Lifetime trauma
- Low educational status
- Low levels of social support
- Death of a loved one

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FOCUS ON SELF-CARE AND IMPROVING YOUR LIFESTYLE.

• Physical activity for 30 minutes a day, three to five times every week.
• Activities such as meditation, mindfulness or Tai Chi can help control stress.
• Sleep seven to nine hours per night.
  • Eat a balanced, healthy diet.
  • Avoid using alcohol and illicit substances.

SET SMALL, ACHIEVABLE GOALS.

Such as...

- Making your bed
- Having lunch with a friend
- Taking a walk

SEEK SUPPORT.

• Tell friends and family how you feel.
  • Join a support group.
  • Seek therapy.
• Address triggers that contribute to your depression.
• Stick to your treatment plan, even if you feel better.

RECOGNIZE YOUR TRIGGERS.

• Notice changes in how you feel, think or act.
  • Write down how you feel day-to-day (moods, feelings, reactions).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRUG CLASS (MECHANISM)</th>
<th>DRUG</th>
<th>POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS</th>
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<td>FLUOXETINE</td>
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<td><strong>TETRACYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANT (NaSSA)</strong></td>
<td>MIRTAZAPINE</td>
<td>• INCREASED APPETITE AND WEIGHT GAIN. • SEDATION. • DRY MOUTH.</td>
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<td><strong>ATYPICAL ANTIDEPRESSANT</strong></td>
<td>BUPROPION</td>
<td>• AGITATION. • GUT ISSUES. • DECREASED APPETITE. • INSOMNIA. • INCREASES THE RISK OF SEIZURES.</td>
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**MAJOR WARNING:**
ANTIDEPRESSANTS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF SUICIDAL THINKING AND BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS UNDER THE AGE OF 24 YEARS WHO HAVE MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER AND OTHER PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS.

**MANY SIDE EFFECTS IMPROVE WITH TIME AFTER STARTING THE MEDICATION.**

**QUICK FACT:**
SOME ANTIDEPRESSANTS HAVE A REBOUND EFFECT IF THEY ARE ABRUPTLY DISCONTINUED. THIS MEANS THAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE RE-EMERGENCE OR WORSENING OF YOUR DEPRESSION IF YOU SUDDENLY STOP TAKING YOUR MEDICATION. DEPENDING ON THE TYPE AND DOSE, SOME ANTIDEPRESSANTS MUST BE SLOWLY TAPERED DOWN WITH THE GUIDANCE OF YOUR PROVIDER.
WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO?

If you or a loved one is struggling with suicidal thoughts and need someone to talk to, please call:

988
SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

If you are having new and unusual side effects from your antidepressant medication, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about this issue.

AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO MEDICATIONS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

If you experience rash, difficulty breathing, swollen tongue or throat and dizziness, stop taking the medication and call 911 immediately.