

Depression

What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a constant feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Most people including children can feel low or 'blue' sometimes. Feeling sad is a normal reaction to experiences that are stressful or upsetting. When these feelings continue, they can take over your child's usual personality and interfere with his/her life. This is called 'depression'.

What causes depression?

The cause of depression is unknown.

Depression is more common in people who have a family history of depression.

What are the symptoms?

A child who used to play often with his/her friends may now spend most of their time alone. A child with depression may not enjoy fun things as they did before. Children and adolescents who are depressed may say they want to be dead or may talk about suicide.

Depressed children and adolescents are at higher risk for committing suicide.

Depressed adolescents may use alcohol or drugs as a way of trying to feel better. Other symptoms of depression are:

- Being moody and irritable - easily upset or tearful
- Becoming withdrawn - avoiding friends, family and regular activities
- Feeling guilty or bad, being self-critical and self-blaming
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time
- Feeling hopeless and wanting to die
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Not taking care of their personal appearance
- Changes in sleep pattern, sleeping too little or too much
- Feeling tired
- Not interested in eating, eating little or too much
- Suffering from aches and pains, such as headaches or stomach-aches

How is it treated?

Depression is usually treated with medicine, psychotherapy (talk therapy), or a combination of the both. Your child's doctor will develop a custom care plan to treat his/her condition.

Sidra Medicine cares about your health. The information in this leaflet should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and the advice of your doctor. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions. You can find us on www.sidra.org