**Understanding Depression**

About 16 million people have depression every year in the United States. Anyone can get depressed.



**Find Help 24/7**

If you need help now, call a 24-hour crisis center at [**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**](tel:1-800-273-8255) or

**1-800-SUICIDE (**[**1-800-784-2433**](tel:1-800-784-2433)**)**for free, private help or dial 911.

Sometimes people who are feeling depressed think about hurting themselves or dying.**If you or someone you know is having these feelings, get help now.**

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)](https://www.samhsa.gov/)—a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—runs both crisis centers. For more information visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) website.

Para obtener asistencia en español durante las 24 horas, llame al [**1-888-628-9454**](tel:1-888-628-9454)**.**

**About Depression**

Depression can happen at any age. Your race, where you live, or how much money you make doesn’t change your chance of having depression. But some people are more likely to be depressed than others:

* Smokers.
* People with medical problems.
* People who are stressed.

Everyone is different, but some common things can lead to depression:

* Feeling lots of stress.
* Going through a difficult life event.
* A big life change, even if it was planned.
* A medical problem.
* Taking a medication known to cause depression.
* Using alcohol or drugs.
* Having blood relatives who have had depression.

For some people, depression is only a problem during stressful times, like a divorce or the death of a loved one. For other people, depression happens on and off throughout their lives.

**Signs of Depression**

Everyone has down days and times when they feel sad. Sadness could turn into depression, but depression and sadness are different:

* **How long:** Depression is felt every day or most days and lasts at least two weeks, usually much longer.
* **How bad:** Depression gets in the way of everyday life. It can stop you from working, carrying out family duties, or doing things you want to do.

People with depression usually feel down or blue. They may have other signs:

* Feeling sad all the time.
* Not wanting to do things that used to be fun for them.
* Being grumpy, easily frustrated, or restless.
* Have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, waking up too early, or sleeping too much.
* Eating more or less than they used to.
* Having trouble thinking.
* Feeling tired, even after sleeping well.
* Feeling worthless.
* Thinking about dying or hurting themselves.

Take the [depression quiz](https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/mood/depression-quiz) to find out if you’re having signs of depression.

**Get Help for Depression**

Many people benefit from treatment for depression. Treatment can help reduce symptoms of depression and shorten how long depression lasts. Treatment usually means getting counseling, taking medications, or doing both.

**Counseling**

Counseling is also known as talk therapy or psychotherapy. Talk therapy can be helpful and is often an important part of treatment for depression. Most talk therapy for depression is for a short time. It typically focuses on the thoughts, feelings, and issues happening in your life now. Talk therapy is more than telling the counselor about your problems. It means working with the counselor to improve the way you cope with things in your life, change behaviors that are causing problems, and find solutions.

**Medications**

Many people with depression find that taking medication can improve their mood and ability to cope. Medications for depression are called antidepressants. Antidepressants cannot solve your problems. They can help you even out your mood and be more able to handle events in your life that are affecting your mood. You will need to see a health care provider to get a prescription for an antidepressant. Follow instructions carefully when using antidepressants. Don’t stop taking them without talking to your health care provider.

By smokefree.gov

# Smoking & Depression

Smokers are more likely to have depression than non-smokers. Nobody knows for sure why this is. People who have depression might smoke to feel better. Or smokers might get depression more easily because they smoke. No matter what the cause, there [are treatments that work for both depression and smoking](https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/mood/understanding-depression).



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### Mood Changes

Mood changes are common after quitting smoking. Some people feel increased sadness. You might be irritable, restless, or feel down or blue. Changes in mood from quitting smoking [may be part of withdrawal](https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/withdrawal/understanding-withdrawal). Withdrawal is your body getting used to not having nicotine. Mood changes from nicotine withdrawal usually get better in a week or two. If mood changes do not get better in a couple of weeks, you should talk to your doctor. Something else, like depression, could be the reason.

Smoking may seem to help you with depression. You might feel better in the moment. But there are many problems with using cigarettes to cope with depression. There are other things you can try to lift your mood:

* **Exercise.** Being physically active can help. Start small and build up over time. This can be hard to do when you’re depressed. But your efforts will pay off.
* **Structure your day.** Make a plan to stay busy. Get out of the house if you can.
* **Be with other people.** Many people who are depressed are cut off from other people. Being in touch or talking with others every day can help your mood.
* **Reward yourself.** Do things you enjoy. Even small things add up and help you feel better.