

# When Sadness Stays



## There is help for depression

Sadness is a part of life. A loved one's death, a job loss or the ending of a relationship can all cause pain. It's normal to have feelings of sadness or grief after stressful events. People going through these problems may say they are depressed. But sadness and depression are not the same.

Sadness will go away with time, but depression can last for months, even years. People who have had depression note marked differences between normal sadness and the disabling weight of major depression.

Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide. Signs of this serious health problem include:

- A sad or blank mood that doesn't go away
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Loss of hope and self worth
- Not being involved in hobbies and things you once enjoyed
- Eating less or more, with extreme weight loss or gain
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Thoughts of suicide or death

If you think this describes you, seek professional help. Don't lose hope. Prolonged depression is not a normal part of life, no matter what your age, sex or health situation. You can change sad to glad. Clinical depression is very treatable, with more than 80 percent of those who seek help showing change for the better.



**BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois**

# Know the Many Faces of Depression



## Crying for Help

If your newborn isn't the only one crying, you may have post partum depression, which only happens after giving birth. It can begin any time after a child is born and can last up to a year. Ten to 20 percent of new mothers have this illness. If this sounds like you, try these coping tips:

- Talk with others about your feelings or fears.
- Spend time with friends or a support group.
- Work out and eat a healthful diet.
- Avoid caffeine, which can set off mood changes.

See a mental health professional if you have major changes in energy, eating habits or mood.

## A SAD Feeling

Some people suffer from signs of great sadness during the winter, but feel better during spring and summer. This kind of sadness is called seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. SAD affects half a million people every winter between September and April, and is worse in December, January and February.

Remedies for SAD include:

- Receiving phototherapy (light treatment)
- Spending time outdoors during the day or bringing more sunlight into your home or workplace
- Drugs prescribed by a doctor if other measures do not work

Learn about the many faces of depression, and take action toward better emotional health.

**Treat emotional health as if a life depends upon it.** People with major depression are eight times more likely to take their own life than those who don't have this problem.