

Depression Self-Assessment

Everyone feels sad or “blue” at times. These are normal feelings that may accompany a major change in life such as the death of a loved one or the loss of a relationship. But people who have difficulty overcoming these feelings within a few weeks, and people who feel depressed for no apparent reason, may suffer from a form of mental illness called [depression](#).

Depression is the most common mental illness. At some point in their lives, an estimated one in four women and one in ten men can expect to develop depression so severe as to require treatment. The illness even can be found among young children.

Fortunately, new advances in treating depression also make it one of the most treatable of all mental illnesses. Therapy, medication or both can relieve symptoms of depression.

The following questions relate to the most common signs of depression. If you have been experiencing any of these signs for more than two weeks, answer “yes.” The more yes answers you tally up, the greater the likelihood that you may be experiencing depression.

Signs of Depression

Check “yes” if you have been experiencing these signs for more than two weeks...

	Yes	No
Do you often feel miserable or sad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have feelings of worthlessness or helplessness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you find it hard to give or receive affection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you find it hard to do things you once enjoyed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you lost interest in your work or hobbies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have frequent crying spells or do you feel like crying much of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it hard for you to sleep without a sleep aid, such as an over-the-counter medication?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you more irritable than usual?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any physical aches or pains (for example, headaches or back pain) that can not be explained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you sometimes feel tired for no reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Depression Assessment
Cooper University Hospital EAP
Page Two

	Yes	No
Do you wake early and then sleep badly for the rest of the night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you recently lost or gained weight rapidly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had thoughts of death or suicide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About Postpartum Depression

An estimated 10% to 20% of new mothers experience postpartum depression (post partum literally means “after birth”). Although the symptoms usually go away within a few days, some mothers experience them for several weeks or more, threatening their ability to care for their child and themselves.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is believed to be caused by a hormone that physically prepares a woman for pregnancy. This hormone is manufactured in large doses in the last stage of pregnancy, but most all of the hormone is flushed from the body during delivery. Between delivery and the time it takes for the body to bring this hormone to normal levels, a woman can experience depression.*

Unfortunately, PPD is hard to detect. Many women are ashamed of their depressed feelings. They also may believe that they are bad mothers, which only heightens their shame. Those closest to the new mother may sense that something is wrong, but dismiss it as the normal stress of being a new mother.

If you are pregnant or trying to conceive, be aware of the possibility that PPD can develop. Awareness may lead you to be more conscious of your emotions in the days following delivery and to come forward when your feelings are uncomfortable.

* *Postpartum depression is only one type of postpartum problem. Some new mothers experience postpartum obsessive compulsive disorder, psychosis, or anxiety disorder.*

Getting help for depression

Depression is treatable. As many as 90% of all depressed people respond to treatment, and nearly everyone who receive treatment experiences some relief.

Depression Assessment
Cooper University Hospital EAP
Page Three

Some people can be treated by counseling only. The counselor may meet with the individual weekly for an hour to discuss underlying thoughts or behaviors that may be causing the depression. Counseling works best with individuals who experience depression brought about by a life circumstance such as a divorce or the death of a loved one, which is sometimes called “situational depression.”

Individuals who experience depression with no such cause, and some individuals with situational depression, may also need medication. A number of drugs to treat depression are available, and the relief they provide may be immediate. However, it may take several attempts to find the right prescription and dosage. A person taking medication for depression also will be directed to counseling.

Where to get help

If depression is getting the better of you, seek help. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers individual and medication management for depression whether it be situational, postpartum or chronic.

To schedule an appointment please call the EAP at 856-342-2280. Your contact is kept confidential and there is no cost to you.

For more information or e-mail us at: spiecker-paula@cooperhealth.edu