

Depression

Millions of people in the United States suffer from depression. About twice as many women as men suffer from this medical condition. Major depression is a whole-body illness that affects a person's body, feelings, thoughts, and behavior.

Everyone experiences bouts of the blues or periods of sadness now and then. However, if these feelings last more than a couple of weeks or interfere with daily life, a person may be suffering from clinical depression.

Depression involves a set of symptoms that can last for months and sometimes years. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with depression cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better.



Causes

The causes of depression are not always known. Research shows the tendency to develop depression may be inherited and that an uneven balance of naturally occurring mood-influencing chemicals in the brain can play a role. People who have a poor self-image, who view themselves negatively, or who are easily overwhelmed by life challenges may be more likely than others to experience depression. A serious loss, chronic illness, difficult relationship, or unwelcome change can trigger depression.

Claremont EAP distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.

For confidential help, call: **800-834-3773**
or visit **claremonteap.com**

Symptoms

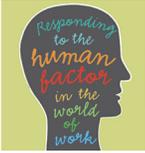
The two major symptoms of depression include a depressed mood and an inability to enjoy life. Depression may also include:

- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances (sleeping too much or difficulty sleeping)
- Change in appetite (eating too much or too little, sometimes weight gain or weight loss)
- Poor concentration
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- General irritability
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempt
- Vague physical aches and pains, such as stomach-aches and headaches
- Excessive crying

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Treatment

Treatment for depression can include counseling, medications, or both. If you take medication, you should begin to feel better within 4 to 6 weeks. Counseling can give you support and strategies for coping and learning new ways to think about situations in your life. With the treatment of depression, recovery is the rule -- not the exception.

- Call Claremont EAP at 800-834-3773 to access your free and confidential counseling sessions with a licensed clinician in private practice.
- Share your treatment plan with people close to you. Talk to friends and relatives and explain what you are going through.
- Take medications exactly the way they are prescribed. You may be tempted to stop taking your medications too soon. However, it is important to keep taking them until your doctor says to stop, even if you begin feeling better. Keep in mind that it may take 2 to 4 weeks to see a noticeable change.
- Report any unusual medication side effects to your doctor, especially if the side effects interfere with your ability to function.
- Keep all follow-up appointments you have with your doctor or therapist. Do not miss an appointment, even if you are feeling better that day.
- Schedule pleasant activities into your day. People tend to feel better when they are doing activities they enjoy.

Self-Care Steps for Depression

- Set realistic goals for yourself, and avoid taking on a great deal of responsibility.
- Divide your workload. Break large tasks into small ones, set priorities, and don't be hard on yourself if you are unable to get everything finished.
- Do activities that make you feel better, such as exercising moderately, going to a movie, or attending social events.
- Do not expect to "snap out" of your depression. Instead, help yourself as much as you can and do not blame yourself for not being up to par.
- Contact your doctor if your symptoms aren't improving. Most people begin feeling better within a couple of weeks.

Krames Staywell

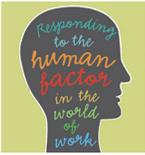
Decision Guide for Depression

Symptoms/Signs	Action
Occasional feelings of "being down" lasting a few days but not interfering with daily activities 	Use self-care
Periods of the blues associated with the menstrual cycle 	See provider
Symptoms of depression 	See provider
Symptoms of depression leading to inability to care for dependents 	See provider
Confused about whereabouts, time, or date; unfamiliar with family or friends 	Call 911
Hallucinations or violent behavior 	Call 911
Threatening suicide or harm to others 	Call 911

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21 Easy Ways to Improve Your Diet

Eating healthy can reduce your risk of illness and lengthen your life. Eating a balanced, low-fat, low-cholesterol diet reduces your risk of heart disease, certain cancers, diabetes, stroke and other diseases.

Follow these tips to help improve your diet.

1. Have seconds on vegetables. Doing so will help ensure you consume the recommended three- to five-serving daily minimum. Reminder: A typical vegetable serving size is 1/2 cup.
2. Eat a whole-grain cereal for breakfast.
3. Top your cereal with fresh fruit. You'll add fiber and, depending on the fruit, a healthful dose of vitamins A, B and C.
4. Order healthy choices when you eat out. Request that foods such as fish and chicken be baked instead of fried.
5. Keep salads healthy by going easy on regular dressing or using low-fat or nonfat dressing. Four tablespoons of regular dressing can contain 60 grams of fat, which is as much as most adults should consume in a day.
6. Eat fish for dinner at least once a week. The omega-3 fatty acids in fish can reduce your risk of heart attack.
7. Choose whole fruit over fruit juice. You'll consume less sugar and more fiber.
8. Add onions to pizza, sandwiches, hamburgers, salads, and chili. They're good for your blood and your heart.
9. Educate yourself about nutrition. Your new knowledge will make it easier to eat a well-balanced diet.
10. Drink a full glass of water before a meal and another one with it. You'll stay hydrated and be less likely to overeat.
11. Add lentils, beans, kasha, brown rice and peas to your diet for an added fiber boost.
12. Buy low-fat or fat-free bologna, ham and other cold cuts.
13. Choose low-fat alternatives when a food craving hits. Go for a low-fat candy bar instead of a regular one, or baked chips instead of regular ones.
14. Don't peel apples, pears, peaches and potatoes. Many of their nutrients and a lot of their fiber is contained in, or just under, their skins.
15. Buy "healthy," low-salt versions of soups, pasta sauces and luncheon meats if you're watching your sodium intake.
16. Drink iced tea instead of soda. Tea contains antioxidants and can help protect against heart disease and cancer.
17. A 12-ounce can of regular soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar; diet sodas are sugar-free but contain no nutrients and lots of chemicals.
18. Read food labels of comparable brands of salad dressings, convenience foods, frozen foods, packaged dinners, cookies, and crackers. Choose those with the least fat, cholesterol and sodium.
19. Switch from whole milk to 1 percent or skim milk.
20. Take fresh or dried fruit to work for a midmorning or midafternoon snack.
21. Eat reasonable portions of food. Even healthy foods can cause weight gain if you eat too much of them.

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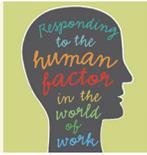
Claremont EAP can help with

all of these choices!

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Will Basics by Lawyers.com

You definitely need a will if you have children. Even if you don't have children, you probably need a will. Each state has formal requirements for preparing and signing a will.

Generally:

- You must declare that the document you're signing is your will
- Your signature must be witnessed by at least two or three witnesses, who must sign the will in each other's presence
- Each state has specific requirements for how your signature and the signatures of the witnesses must be worded



Types of Wills

A **holographic will** is handwritten, without witnesses. Few states recognize holographic wills, and only in very particular circumstances.

Oral wills, also called “**nuncupative wills**,” are only recognized in a few states and usually only in compelling situations such as the impending death of a soldier in wartime.

A **self-proving will** is one that has been witnessed and signed with all the formalities required by state law. A self-proving will saves a great deal of time and effort when it turns out that one or more witnesses can't be located or are themselves deceased.

What Should My Will Include?

Your will should detail:

- That you are of sound mind as you are reading and signing the will
- The names, locations and dates of birth of your immediate family, including your spouse and all children, including adopted children. Talk with your lawyer about whether to name illegitimate children and step-children to avoid claims that you have simply left them out and would have provided for them if you'd been thinking of them.
- Appointment of a guardian and alternate guardian for any minor children. Your lawyer will be able to tell you whether you should have a separate guardian to manage their finances.
- A list of who should inherit specific items of property. In some states, this is handled more informally with a separate list that can be frequently updated, which is kept with the will.
- What will happen to any remaining property not specifically mentioned by you
- Who will be your “executor”, the person responsible for carrying out the directions you leave in your will, such as distributing the property and paying any debts and taxes

Where Should I Keep My Will?

A will should be kept in a safe place such as a bank safe deposit box or fireproof safe at home, where it can be easily located after your death.

If you keep your will in a safe deposit box, you'll need to arrange for your executor to have access to the box after your death. Many states put a freeze on a safe deposit box at death, which makes it more difficult to retrieve the will.

When Should I Update My Will?

Your will should be updated whenever:

- You marry or divorce
- You give birth to or adopt a child
- When a family member or other beneficiary of your estate dies
- When someone you've named as an executor, trustee or guardian is no longer able to fulfill that role
- When you decide to change an executor, trustee or guardian
- When you want to change the way your property will be distributed
- When you move to another state
- When your net worth increases dramatically

Revising a Will

A will can be revised by:

- Making minor changes in what's called a “**codicil**,” a formal amendment to the will
- Preparing an entirely new will revoking the prior will
- Independent events such as divorce or adoption. State laws vary as to the effect these events may have on the validity of your will.

Call Claremont EAP at 800-834-3773 to request for your free Simple Will Kit – the only cost to you is having it notarized.

Although making a will is a sobering experience, your loved ones and friends will thank you for being so organized and thoughtful ahead of time.

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