

Depression: Lower Your Risk of Depression Coming Back

Depression can come and go. When depression symptoms come back it's called a relapse.

Just as a reminder, depression symptoms can include feeling sad, hopeless, or losing interest in or not getting pleasure from the things that you used to enjoy. You may be finding it hard to focus, remember things, or make decisions.

Depression can feel different for everyone.

But when you are feeling better there are things you can do to help lower your chance of depression coming back.

Here are a few ways.

Take your medicines exactly as prescribed.

Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

For example, you may have side effects like difficulty sleeping.

Or your symptoms may not feel like they are getting better. There may be better medicine for you.

Continue to take your medicine even after your symptoms improve. Don't stop taking them without talking to your doctor. If your depression keeps coming back, your doctor may suggest that you take medicine even longer.

Keep going to counseling. Talk with your counselor if you are having a hard time attending your sessions or you think the sessions aren't working.

Choose healthy foods. Include fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains in your diet each day.

Move more. Adding a little movement into your life may just be the mental perk you need. It can be as easy as moving more today than you did yesterday.

You can choose almost anything, like walking, running, biking, and swimming. Working in the yard, such as raking or pushing a lawn mower, and dancing count too.

It's best when it's something you like to do.

Keep a regular sleep schedule.

Try for 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night.

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If the normal stuff—like avoiding caffeine before bed, shutting off devices at least a half hour before you try to sleep, and turning off the lights—isn't working, it may be time to talk to your doctor about how to get a better night's sleep.

Avoid using illegal drugs or marijuana and drinking alcohol. If you need help quitting alcohol or drugs, it's important that you talk to your doctor.

See your doctor right away if you have new symptoms or feel that your depression is coming back. And please, if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or another person, get emergency help or call 988 right away.

For some people, depression can ease back into your life without an invitation or an event.

It can just come back. You know yourself best, so if you feel sad, anxious, or hopeless most of the time for more than a few days, call your doctor.