

## Treating your depression

This leaflet is for people who have been diagnosed with depression and prescribed an antidepressant medicine.

### About depression

Around 1 person in every 7 will experience at least a short period of depression at some stage in their life.

Your doctor will have discussed the symptoms of your depression with you. For most people, these include at least some of the following:

- depressed mood (feeling down)
- not being interested in, or not wanting to do, the things you usually enjoy
- having guilty feelings
- disturbed sleep (sleeping too much or not enough)
- being tired all the time
- not being able to concentrate
- not being able to enjoy things, or
- thinking a lot about death or suicide.

These can all make it hard to do things you would normally do.

### Treatment for your depression



Treatment will help you recover faster from depression.

The two main treatments are 'talking therapy' and antidepressant medicines.

Using 'talking therapy' along with an antidepressant medicine is often the best way to treat depression.

Talking therapies aim to treat depression by helping change the way you think about and react to situations and relationships.

Antidepressant medicines can also help relieve depressed feelings.

### Antidepressant medicines

There are many different antidepressant medicines and these all work as well as each other. Your doctor will discuss these choices with you.

However, some people will respond better to one antidepressant medicine than another.

### How long will it take for my antidepressant medicine to work?

It may take 4 to 6 weeks before you notice the full effect, but some people respond earlier.

- Ask your doctor about making regular appointments so you can talk about your progress.



### How long will I need to take antidepressant medicine for?

- You will need to take the antidepressant medicine for 6 months or more to make sure you are well again.
- You must talk to your doctor before you decide to take less of (or stop) your antidepressant medicine.

### Consumer medicines information (CMI)

The CMI will give you more information about your antidepressant medicine.

- You can get a CMI from your pharmacist or doctor, by calling the NPS Medicines Line on 1300 888 763 (free call) or by going to [www.nps.org.au/consumers](http://www.nps.org.au/consumers).

## Taking your antidepressant medicine

The dose and number of times each day you will need to take an antidepressant medicine will depend on which one is prescribed for you.

Antidepressant medicines work best when taken every day at about the same time(s).

If you forget to take a dose, either talk with your doctor or pharmacist, or consult the CMI.

## 'Side effects' of antidepressant medicines

All antidepressant medicines have side effects. These are any unusual things you notice after you start taking your antidepressant medicine (such as feeling drowsy or sick, or having a dry mouth) and may affect you more, or less, than other people.

Most side effects usually settle down after 1 or 2 weeks of treatment.

- Talk with your doctor:
  - about what side effects you might expect
  - if you are experiencing side effects.

If you and your doctor decide that you need to change to another antidepressant medicine, you may need to have a few days when you don't take any antidepressant medicine at all. (Your doctor will talk to you about this.)

## What about my other medicines?

Sometimes it is not safe to take other medicines (including herbal and natural medicines) with your antidepressant medicine; for example, St John's wort and many cough and cold preparations.

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all other medicines you take, including those prescribed by any other health professional and those you've bought without a prescription.

## Other things you ought to know

- Make sure you keep appointments with your doctor so that you can talk about how you feel.
- Talk to your doctor about all the things you can do to treat your depression.
- You can also get information and help from the services listed in the next column.

## See your doctor if...

- you think you are experiencing side effects
- you are not feeling better
- you feel worse, or are thinking about suicide or harming yourself
- you have any other questions.

## Try to

- do things you usually enjoy
- continue your normal routines
- reduce your stress by relaxing
- exercise regularly — make this something you find enjoyable (e.g. swimming, walking)
- eat healthy foods.



## Where can I find more information?

If you need to talk to someone about your depression (or are caring for someone with depression), call: Lifeline 131 114 (24 hours, 7 days a week).

For information about medicines, call: NPS Medicines Line 1300 888 763 (free call 9am to 5pm, weekdays).

For general information, call: The Lifeline Mental Health Information Service 1300 131 114 (free call 9am to 5pm, weekdays).

## Some useful websites

- [www.depressionnet.com.au](http://www.depressionnet.com.au)
- [www.bluepages.anu.edu.au](http://www.bluepages.anu.edu.au)
- [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- [www.crufad.unsw.edu.au](http://www.crufad.unsw.edu.au)
- [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)
- [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)
- [www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)

Websites provide general information. Always discuss any specific questions or concerns with your doctor or pharmacist.

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