

DEPRESSIVE Disorders



04

DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

Depression, otherwise known as major depressive disorder (MDD) or clinical depression, is a common and serious mood disorder. Those who suffer from depression experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness and lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. Aside from the emotional problems caused by depression, individuals can also present with a physical symptom such as chronic pain or digestive issues.

SYMPTOMS

- Loss of interest or loss of pleasure in all activities
- Change in appetite or weight
- Sleep disturbances
- Feeling agitated or feeling slowed down
- Fatigue
- Feelings of low self-worth, guilt or shortcomings
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Suicidal thoughts or intentions

OTHER TYPES OF DEPRESSION

- Seasonal Pattern Depression (Seasonal Affective Disorder)
- Postpartum Depression

Seasonal Pattern Depression (Seasonal Affective Disorder)

Major Depressive Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern (formerly known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD) is characterised by recurrent episodes of depression in late fall and winter, alternating with periods of normal mood the rest of the year.

Researchers at the *National Institute of Mental Health* were the first to suggest this condition was a response to decreased light and experimented with the use of bright light to address the symptoms. Scientists have identified that the neurotransmitter serotonin may not be working optimally in many people who experience this disorder.

Although not everyone experiences all the following symptoms, the classic characteristics of Major Depressive Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern include:

- Hypersomnia (or oversleeping)
- Daytime fatigue
- Overeating
- Weight gain
- Craving carbohydrates

Many people may experience other symptoms as well, including:

- Decreased sexual interest
- Lethargy
- Hopelessness
- Suicidal thoughts
- Lack of interest in usual activities and decreased socialisation

Postpartum Depression

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) with Peripartum Onset (also known as postpartum depression) is different from a temporary mood disturbance after childbirth. Up to 6% of women will experience a major depressive episode during pregnancy or in the first year following delivery. It is also estimated that 50% of all MDD episodes actually begin prior to delivery or postpartum. For this reason, all episodes are referred to collectively as “peripartum.”

Postpartum depression can present different symptoms, depending on the person. But common symptoms include:

- Extreme difficulty in day-to-day functioning
- Feelings of guilt, anxiety and fear
- Loss of pleasure in life
- Insomnia
- Bouts of crying
- Thoughts of hurting oneself or the infant