

# Feeling Sad

Feeling sad or unhappy is normal when something goes wrong or someone dies. These feelings often go away with time and you feel better.

If these feelings are severe or affect your everyday life for more than 2 weeks, see your doctor. Treatment can help.

## Signs

- Lose interest in things that you enjoy
- Feel restless
- Sleep too much or are not able to sleep
- Feel tired all the time or lack energy
- Gain or lose weight
- Not want to eat or lose appetite
- Have a hard time concentrating or remembering
- Feel hopeless, guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Have headaches, stomach aches, bowel problems or pain that does not get better with treatment

If you have any of these signs for more than 2 weeks, see your doctor. You may have a health condition called depression. If you are thinking of harming yourself or others, seek help **right away** by going to a hospital emergency room.

## Your Care

The first step to feeling better is talking to someone who can help you. This might be a doctor or a counselor. Your care may include medicine and counseling. Here are things you can do that can help:

- Eat a healthy diet and avoid junk food.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid alcohol and street drugs.
- Try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

- Stay active, even if you do not feel like it.
- Plan activities for the day.
- Set a small goal each day that you can do, such as do a small task or take a walk.
- Avoid stress if possible.
- Avoid being alone.
- Join a support group.
- Talk to clergy or spiritual leaders.
- Pray or meditate.
- Share your feelings with family or friends.
- Write down your thoughts and feelings.
- Let your family and friends help you.

## **Family and Friends Can Help**

Helping someone get treatment is important. Your loved one may not have the energy or desire to ask for help. Ways to help:

- Offer to go to the doctor with your loved one. You can ask questions and write down notes.
- Invite the person to go for walks or outings. Do not be discouraged if he or she says no. Continue asking, but do not push.
- Give emotional support through talking and careful listening. Do not ignore feelings, but point out realities and offer hope.
- Offer reassurance that with time he or she will feel better.
- **Do not ignore** words or actions that show the person thinks life is worthless. **Do not ignore** words or actions about hurting others. Seek help **right away** at a hospital emergency department.

Talk to your doctor if you think you or a loved one has feelings of sadness that last for more than 2 weeks.