

LOOKING UP

FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

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Feeling Better — What Does It Mean For Me?

Now that you have started medication, talk therapy or both, you may have noticed you feel better some days. Different people experience recovery in different ways. What you can expect to feel is different for everyone.

Following are a few examples:

- More energy
- Brighter mood
- More patient and relaxed
- Improved focus in your personal life and work
- Keener interest in hobbies or former favorite pastimes
- More restful sleep
- Feeling more calm
- Having more control over your life

It is important to remember that as you begin to feel better, it is tempting to over-extend yourself. Pace yourself. Take time to realize you are making progress.

Treatment of depression can take time. It is important for you to make a commitment to your treatment. If you are placed on drug therapy, make sure you take your medication exactly as prescribed. If talk therapy has been recommended, keep all of your therapy appointments.

It is a good idea to keep a journal. This allows you to have a written record of your journey to recovery.

Why Should you Stay on Your Medication?

If you have been prescribed medication for your depression and have started to feel better, you may be tempted to stop taking your medicine. Following are four reasons to stay on your medicine:

1. A return of symptoms, or relapse, can happen with depression. This frequently occurs when people stop their medication too soon. Talk to your doctor about dosage options.
2. Sticking with your medication should help you do more of the things you enjoy. Things will seem easier and will take less effort.
3. Over time, your medication will help to balance your brain's natural supply of chemicals, like serotonin. This is how your medicine helps you feel good again.
4. Antidepressant medications are not habit forming and will not lead to dependency.

The more time you give yourself to stick with your treatment plan, the better off you will be in the long run.

APS, Your Wellness Partner

- Committed to helping you help yourself
- Provides informative newsletters to members
- Offers toll-free confidential voicemail for member requests or comments at 1.800.305.3720, ext. 3420

We are interested in your feedback. Please take our brief survey to help us provide you with the most supportive information possible. [Click here to access the survey.](#)



Four Tips for Getting Things Done

If you are feeling like you are unable to accomplish anything, the following are simple tips for success:

1. Do not rely on your memory. Write things down. Each morning, make a list of the things to do that day.
2. Decide what time of day you are at your best and tackle the tough jobs during that time. For example, if you are a morning person, start work early so you can make notes and plan your day. Then, use the time after lunch for less demanding tasks.
3. Do not try to pack too much into one day. Allow time between meetings or chores to catch your breath and recharge. Take a few minutes to have a cup of tea or a snack. Or, close your eyes and clear your mind.
4. If your workload is too much to handle, speak to your boss, family, and friends. They can help you decide which tasks need to be done first. That way you will not feel as if you need to get everything done at once.

Taking on New Challenges

Part of getting well is the ability to take on new challenges. Starting new activities is an important part of getting better. Although new challenges can be stressful, do not let that stop you. Feeling some discomfort is a normal part of change. Taking on challenges — one at a time, in manageable steps — is how we learn and grow. It is part of being alive and looking forward to living each day.

Following are some ideas you might try:

- Is there a hobby or craft you have been interested in? Check your local area for a class or workshop
- Reconnect with old friends
- Work on cultivating a new friendship. You may find it is as gratifying to give support as it is to receive it

Celebrate even the small victories you make. You have earned it.

Some Common Side Effects of Antidepressant Medication

Antidepressants work best when you take them every day exactly as your doctor prescribes. The information you give your doctor, before he or she prescribes a medication and after you have started taking it, is very important. This information will help your doctor treat your depression safely and effectively.

Most side-effects are mild and temporary. Only a few people have side effects that lead to a change in medication. Most side effects disappear within two to six weeks after beginning treatment. Common side effects include:

- Nervousness
- Blurred vision
- Sweating
- Agitation
- Sleepiness
- Weight gain
- Decreased interest in sex
- Insomnia
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Tremors
- Dry mouth

Tell your doctor about any side effects. Adjusting your medication is a complicated decision. You and your doctor should make that decision together.

Do not make changes to your medication by yourself. This can be dangerous. Making changes yourself can also prevent your medicine from working.

Keeping your primary care provider informed about your treatment is essential. When you receive care from more than one doctor, it is important that they be able to communicate with each other. Signing a consent to release information allows your doctors to share information.

Simple goals:
Stretch your limits
Reach for recovery
Recognize each step of improvement

Looking Up is a newsletter for individuals and their family members eligible for APS Healthcare services.

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