

# Managing your depression by taking antidepressants



Depression is not a normal part of aging, and you don't have to manage it on your own. There are effective treatment options for depression. Common treatments are antidepressant medicine, talk therapy/counseling, or a combination of both.

## To feel your best, it's important to follow your doctor's instructions for taking your medicine.

It's easy to forget to take your medicine. Here are three tips that can help:

### 1. Take your medicine at the same time every day

- Use a pill box so you can see if you've taken your medicine
- Mark a calendar each time you take your medicine
- Use a mobile app to set up text and email reminders

### 2. Remember to refill before your medicine runs out

- Ask your pharmacy to send refill reminders
- Make a note in your calendar to remind yourself to refill your medicine at least four days before running out
- Remember, you can use Provide-A-Ride transportation service for trips to the pharmacy

### 3. Give your antidepressants time to work

- Keep taking your medicine, even if you don't notice a change right away
- It may take six to eight weeks to feel the full benefits
- If the antidepressant doesn't seem to be working, your doctor might change the dosage or try a different drug
- Important: Don't stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor as this could cause side effects or worsen symptoms

## What else do I need to know?

### How long will I need to keep taking an antidepressant?

- Most people experiencing depression take an antidepressant for six to 12 months – sometimes longer
- If you're taking an antidepressant for depression, keep taking your medicine even when you start to feel better as you don't want your symptoms to return
- Your doctor will let you know when to stop taking your medicine

### What about side effects?

- Antidepressants can cause side effects like headaches, upset stomach, fatigue, or restlessness
- Many of the side effects tend to be mild and usually improve within a few weeks
- If side effects bother you too much, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about them as your doctor might try a different medicine
- Remember: Do not stop taking your antidepressant before talking to your doctor

### What about other treatments for depression?

- Counseling or “talk” therapy is another common treatment for depression. Often, a combination of counseling and medicine is most effective.
- Many find support groups and social support from family, friends, and spiritual or religious advisors helpful
- Some also use holistic remedies. Talk with your doctor about any remedies you're using, so they can be included in your treatment plan. Check with your Care Coordinator to see if this kind of treatment is covered by your plan.

### Are there places in my community that can help?

- The National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI MN) offers help, including support groups, for people with depression and their families. Visit [namimn.org](https://www.namimn.org) for more information. You can also call (651) 645-2948 or toll free 1 (888) 626-4435 or email [namihelps@namimn.org](mailto:namihelps@namimn.org).



#### Have questions? We're here to help.

Bring your questions to your pharmacist or doctor. You can also call your Care Coordinator for more information.

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