



Depression Is A Serious Condition For Millions Of Americans

(NAPS)—Many people feel “down in the dumps” from time to time. In most cases, usually it goes away. However, if the feeling persists, it may be a sign of clinical depression.

Approximately 30 million Americans deal with depression at some point in their lives. Once considered a condition associated with the elderly, depression among youth—especially young women—is on the rise.

More than 11 million American women suffer from clinical depression each year and may not know it. Therefore, it's best to know the symptoms.

According to Robert Coleman, D.O., an osteopathic physician in Alabama, you may have clinical depression if you experience five or more of the following symptoms for more than two weeks straight:

- Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood;
- Sleeping too little or too much;
- Loss of pleasure or interest in activities;
- Feeling restless or irritable;
- Persistent physical symptoms of illnesses that don't respond to treatment;
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions;
- Fatigue or loss of energy;
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless;
- “Accidental” drug overdose;
- Giving away cherished items;
- Persistent thoughts of suicide or death.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, the next step is getting to the root of your problem. Events that can bring on depression include: the death of a close family member, divorce or relationship breakup, issues such as worrying about grades, worrying about parents and peer acceptance, experiencing confusion over



There are ways to differentiate between “the blues” and more serious clinical depression.

sexual identity and suffering from rape or incest.

The need to get help is crucial. Severe depression can start with relatively mild problems (including headaches, stomach pain or nausea), but it can also lead to much more serious difficulties (such as breathing problems, chronic neck and back pain), and for some, suicide.

For some people, overcoming depression may simply require a significant change. This could include transferring to a new college or job, exercising and eating right, or finding positive activities that help fill up time and that offer chances to meet new people.

For others, however, battling depression may require intensive counseling, psychotherapy or medications which are very common today.

Various studies indicate that anti-depressant medications successfully treat depression in as many as 80 percent of the individuals who take them.

D.O.s are fully licensed physicians able to prescribe medication and perform surgery. They treat people, not just symptoms.

To learn more about D.O.s and osteopathic medicine, visit the American Osteopathic Association's Web site at www.aoa-net.org or call toll free 1-800-621-1773.