



Depression in Women

Clinical depression is a biologically-based brain disorder that affects one's thoughts, feelings, behavior and physical health. It is an "affective disorder," which means that changes in mood occur in the depressed person. Clinical depression does not discriminate – it can develop in anyone at any age.

Rates of depression are similar in girls and boys before adolescence, but with the onset of puberty, a female's risk of developing depression increases dramatically – twice that of males. Experts believe that women may be more prone to depression because of changes in hormone levels that occur throughout a woman's life. These include puberty, pregnancy and menopause, as well as after giving birth, having a hysterectomy or experiencing a miscarriage.

Several other factors that are unique to women may contribute to their higher rates of depression. These include reproductive, genetic or other biological factors, interpersonal factors and certain psychological and personality characteristics.

Symptoms

- Constantly feeling sad and anxious
- Feeling hopelessness, helplessness, pessimism and guilt
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or feeling fatigued
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering
- Sleeping and eating excessively or sparingly
- Abusing alcohol or other drugs
- Thoughts of suicide or death

Statistics

- Women are twice as likely to develop depression as men.
- Depressive illnesses affect more than 12 million women.
- More than 80 percent of people with depressive disorders improve when they receive appropriate treatment.

- Ten to twenty-five percent of women will experience an episode of major depression at some point in their lifetime.
- Depression in women may occur earlier, last longer, be associated with stressful life events and be more sensitive to seasonal changes.
- Women are more likely to experience guilty feelings and attempt suicide.
- Men may be more willing to acknowledge fatigue, irritability, loss of interest in work or hobbies, and sleep disturbances rather than feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and excessive guilt that women will admit.
- Depression is not the fault of someone or a weakness. Certain factors such as family history, excess stress, a serious illness or the loss of a loved one can onset depression.

Tips

- Try and get physical exercise or participate in a social event each day.
- Surround yourself with loved ones and share your feelings as much as possible with family and friends.
- Think positively. This will help eliminate negative thoughts and improve your treatment.
- Healing takes time; don't expect to get well overnight. Your feelings should improve gradually and not immediately.

ADAMH is your community safety net. If you or someone you love needs help call 276-CARE, the front door to the ADAMH system of care.