



You could be depressed and not know it.

Depression strikes one in four women and one in eight men – sometime during their lifetimes. Yet two out of three of them don't get treatment. Are you one of them?

You might be depressed if you feel...

- Tired all the time
- Sad most of the time
- Guilty
- Worthless
- Unable to think clearly, make decisions
- Hungry all the time

Or if you have...

- No enjoyment in what used to be fun
- Repeated thoughts of death or suicide
- No appetite
- Trouble sleeping (too little or too much)

If you notice any of these in your daily life, tell your doctor of internal medicine (internist). They could stem from depression or other illnesses. Your internist will determine which.



Clearing up some confusion.

We doctors of internal medicine are also known as “internists” or “general internists.”

This should not be confused with “interns,” who are doctors in their first year of training after medical school.

Nor are we the same as “general practitioners” (GPs), or “family physicians” (FPs), whose practices may include surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics, and whose training is not solely concentrated on adults.

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INTERNAL MEDICINE
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Feel blue? Tired all the time? Your internist can help.





A common illness. Not a personal weakness.

If you think you're depressed, here's what you should know:

At least 20 million American adults suffer from depression, and it is on the rise – especially among the elderly.

Depression can come from chemical imbalances in the brain, hormonal changes, medications, or things going on in your life. It is not a passing blue mood that can be wished away.

Your internist can help you find out why you are feeling this way.



A treatable illness.

If you think you or a family member might be depressed – ask your doctor of internal medicine (internist) about it. There is a wide choice of effective antidepressant medications – old and new – nowadays.

Should you need one of them, you and your internist will team up to choose the best medication for you.

What you need to know about antidepressant medication:

- Tell your internist about any store-bought medications – or herbal products – you are taking.
- Take your prescribed pills daily.
- Most pills take 3-4 weeks to take effect.
- Continue your pills even when feeling better.
- Some pills require regular blood checks.
- Do not stop the pills without checking with your internist.
- Ask your internist if you have any questions about your treatment.

In addition to antidepressant medication, your internist might also refer you to a psychotherapist.

St. John's wort: The jury's still out.

St. John's wort, an herbal product, has attracted a lot of media attention for its antidepressant potential. It appears to be somewhat effective, at least in the short-term, and only for mild to moderate depression.

The evidence of its effectiveness is limited. It all comes from Europe, where studies are based on preparations that may not be the same as what is being sold in the U.S. The FDA does not even standardize or verify ingredients of herbal products.

The National Institutes of Health is currently sponsoring a study comparing St. John's wort to newer antidepressant medications.

Caution: If you are taking St. John's wort, be sure to tell your internist. It can reduce the effect of certain prescription medications unrelated to depression or cause adverse drug interactions.

