

# Major depressive disorder treatment

The treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD), often referred to as [depression](#), typically involves a combination of psychotherapy, medication, lifestyle changes, and support from mental health professionals. The specific treatment plan can vary depending on the severity of the depression and individual factors. Here are the main components of MDD treatment:

## Psychotherapy (Talk Therapy):

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to depression. **Interpersonal Therapy (IPT):** IPT focuses on improving interpersonal relationships and communication skills to address depressive symptoms. **Psychodynamic Therapy:** This form of therapy explores unconscious thoughts and past experiences that may be influencing current depressive symptoms. **Behavioral Activation:** This therapy aims to increase engagement in positive and rewarding activities to counteract depression. **Medication:**

**Antidepressant Medications:** There are several classes of antidepressants, including selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), and others. These medications work to balance neurotransmitters in the brain and alleviate depressive symptoms. **Antianxiety Medications:** In some cases, medications like benzodiazepines or buspirone may be prescribed to address co-occurring anxiety symptoms. **Mood Stabilizers:** For individuals with bipolar disorder or mood swings, mood stabilizers like lithium may be prescribed alongside antidepressants. **Lifestyle Changes:**

**Regular Exercise:** Physical activity has been shown to improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression. **Healthy Diet:** Eating a balanced diet rich in nutrients can support mental well-being. **Adequate Sleep:** Maintaining a regular sleep schedule and addressing sleep disturbances is crucial. **Stress Reduction:** Techniques like mindfulness meditation, yoga, and relaxation exercises can help manage stress. **Social Support:**

Connecting with friends and family or joining support groups can provide emotional support and reduce feelings of isolation. **Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT):** In severe cases of depression that do not respond to other treatments or in cases where rapid improvement is needed, ECT may be considered. It involves administering electrical currents to the brain under anesthesia and is usually reserved for specific situations.

**Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS):** TMS is a non-invasive procedure that uses magnetic fields to stimulate nerve cells in the brain. It is considered for individuals who have not responded to other treatments.

**Ketamine Infusion Therapy:** Ketamine, administered under medical supervision, has shown promise in rapidly reducing symptoms of severe depression in some individuals.

**Alternative and Complementary Therapies:** Some people find relief from depression symptoms through practices such as acupuncture, herbal supplements, or light therapy. It's important to discuss these options with a healthcare provider.

**Regular Follow-Up:** Continued monitoring by a mental health professional is essential to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.

It's important to note that the effectiveness of treatments can vary from person to person. What

works best for one individual may not work as well for another. Treatment decisions should be made in consultation with a mental health professional who can tailor the approach to the individual's needs and preferences. Additionally, if someone is experiencing severe depression with thoughts of self-harm or suicide, immediate medical attention is crucial, and emergency services should be contacted. Depression is a treatable condition, and many individuals experience significant improvement in their symptoms with the right treatment and support.

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**Major depressive disorder** (MDD), a common psychiatric condition, adversely affects patients' **moods** and **quality of life**. Despite the development of various treatments, many patients with MDD remain vulnerable and inadequately controlled.

Typically, people are treated with antidepressant medication and, in many cases, also receive counseling, particularly cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

Medication appears to be effective, but the effect may only be significant in the most severely depressed.

Hospitalization may be necessary in cases with associated self-neglect or a significant risk of harm to self or others. A minority are treated with **electroconvulsive therapy** (ECT). The course of the disorder varies widely, from one episode lasting weeks to a lifelong disorder with recurrent major depressive episodes. Depressed individuals have shorter life expectancies than those without depression, in part because of greater susceptibility to medical illnesses and suicide. It is unclear whether or not medications affect the risk of suicide. Current and former patients may be stigmatized.

The understanding of the nature and causes of depression has evolved over the centuries, though this understanding is incomplete and has left many aspects of depression as the subject of discussion and research. Proposed causes include psychological, psycho-social, hereditary, evolutionary and biological factors. Long-term substance abuse may cause or worsen depressive symptoms. Psychological treatments are based on theories of personality, interpersonal communication, and learning. Most biological theories focus on the monoamine chemicals serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine, which are naturally present in the brain and assist communication between nerve cells. This cluster of symptoms (syndrome) was named, described and classified as one of the mood disorders in the 1980 edition of the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual.

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Ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba) is found in many formulations from capsules to energy drinks. It has been used to treat memory loss, **depression**, anxiety, dizziness, claudication, erectile dysfunction, tinnitus, and headache. Ginkgo affects bleeding via an antiplatelet effect and antagonism of platelet-activating factor.

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see **Treatment resistant depression**.

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Major **depressive disorder** (MDD) is the fifth leading cause of non-fatal **disability** worldwide <sup>1)</sup>.

The prevalence of comorbid Major depressive disorder is high in the first episode and drug-naïve schizophrenia patients. Some demographic and clinical variables are associated with the severity of depression in these schizophrenia patients <sup>2)</sup>.

Major **depressive disorder** (MDD) (also known as clinical **depression**, **major depression**, unipolar depression, or unipolar disorder; or as recurrent depression in the case of repeated episodes) is a mental disorder characterized by a pervasive and persistent low mood that is accompanied by low self-esteem and by a loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities. The term "depression" is used in a number of different ways. It is often used to mean this syndrome but may refer to other mood disorders or simply to a low mood. Major depressive disorder is a disabling condition that adversely affects a person's family, work or school life, sleeping and eating habits, and general health. In the United States, around 3.4% of people with major depression die by suicide, and up to 60% of people who die by suicide had depression or another mood disorder.

## Treatment

**Treatment resistant depression.**

<sup>1)</sup>

Murray CJ, Lopez AD. Measuring the global burden of disease. N Engl J Med. 2013; 369:448-457

<sup>2)</sup>

Li Z, Xue M, Zhao L, Zhou Y, Wu X, Xie X, Lang X, Zhang X. Comorbid major depression in first-episode drug-naïve patients with schizophrenia: Analysis of the Depression in Schizophrenia in China (DISC) study. J Affect Disord. 2021 Jul 5;294:33-38. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2021.06.075. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34265669.

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