

AALFA Family Clinic
4465 White Bear Parkway
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
Phone: 651-653-0062 Fax: 651-653-0288

KEY POINTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

1. Depression is a common medical illness. It is NOT a sign of personal weakness or failure.
2. Depression symptoms affect all parts of us—our thoughts, feelings, relationships and body functions.
3. Depression is more than just “feeling down” about things. Talk with your physician about your symptoms.
4. The causes of depression are complex. Some factors include:
 - Brain chemistry
 - Learned patterns of thinking and feeling
 - Genes inherited from family
 - Life stressors, either ongoing or in crisis situations
5. Treatment of depression is effective, but may take several weeks to several months. Without treatment, depression can last for years.
6. Treatment with counseling and/or medication is effective. It often requires adjusting your treatment to get the full benefit, but you will get better.
7. We want to see you regularly in our clinic until you and your physician believe that you are definitely better.
Call or come in right away if your symptoms of depression get worse or especially if you develop suicidal thinking.
8. **If you are feeling suicidal, don't act on those thoughts. Go directly to St. Joseph's Hospital, United Hospital, or another local ER with a family member or friend if possible.**
9. Other crisis phone numbers include:
 - Ramsey County Adult Mental Health Crisis Services: 651-266-7900
 - 24 Hour Crisis Connection: 612-379-6363
 - First Call MN: 1-800-543-7709

FOR DEPRESSION TREATED WITH MEDICATION

- The first noticeable improvement in your symptoms may take 2-6 weeks.
- Side effects from antidepressant medication usually get better or even disappear over time. Report uncomfortable side effects to your physician.
- **Don't stop any medication without first talking with your physician.** If side effects are troublesome, your physician will work with you to manage them.
- Successful treatment for depression often involves adjusting medication dosages or changing medication. Your physician will work with you to achieve optimal treatment.
- Typically you will need to stay on antidepressant medication at least **6-12 months after you are feeling completely better** to prevent the depression from coming back.