

Depression

Just the Facts

Dealing with a life-threatening illness causes a roller coaster of emotions. When the roller coaster plunges downward, feelings such as helplessness, despair and sadness can be experienced. Most patients experience these feelings at some time during treatment. Symptoms of depression can also include loss of appetite, changes in sleep patterns, lack of energy, and inability to focus. If you have had symptoms of depression or have been on anti-depressants before in your life, be sure to inform the doctor, nurse or social worker.

Your Goals:

- ✓ Acknowledge that it is normal to have feelings of sadness at times.
- ✓ Allow yourself to feel sad at times.
- ✓ Identify when you need help with depression.

Important Signs and Symptoms:

Report symptoms to doctor or nurse during clinic hours today.

- Feeling sad most of the time for several days.
- Feelings interfere with your ability to care for self.
- You have thoughts about hurting yourself.
- Mood swings that you cannot control.

What You Can Do At Home:

Allow yourself to feel sad at times.

- Talk about these feelings with someone who listens (family member, volunteer).
- Talk with other patients in your situation (ambulatory support groups, phone contact, internet).
- Use spiritual resources.

Get professional help when needed.

- Psychiatrist and Psychologists can provide:
 - ⇒ Evaluation of cause of depression (sometimes medications can cause depression).
 - ⇒ Medication to manage depression.
 - ⇒ Counseling.
- Ask your doctor, nurse or social worker for a referral.