



important topics
to discuss with
your doctor⁶

MOOD

How long until I start to feel better?
What options are available to help my mood?
How will I know when I'm better?
Why is it important to continue treatment,
even once I start to feel better?

WEIGHT

How does depression affect my appetite?
Will treatment affect my weight?

SEXUAL FUNCTION

How does depression affect my sexual function?
Will treatment affect my sexual function?

SLEEP

How does depression affect my sleep?
Will treatment affect my sleep?

STOPPING TREATMENT

How do I know when to stop treatment?
Will stopping antidepressant treatment be
difficult?

Why is it important to stay on my medication?

Most people start to feel better within 2 to 4 weeks of starting on an antidepressant, however it can take 6 to 8 weeks to experience the full effect.⁴

Everyone responds differently, but you will most likely need to **keep taking your medication for 6 to 12 months** after you begin to feel better, to reduce the chances of your symptoms coming back.⁴⁻⁵

Scan this QR code to
access a handy 'Mental
Health Grocery List',
developed by the Food
& Mood Centre.



References: **1.** AB of S 2009, National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. **2.** Better Health Channel. Depression and exercise. Available at: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/depression-and-exercise> (accessed Dec 2019). **3.** Food & Mood Centre. SMILES Trial. Available at: <https://foodandmoodcentre.com.au/media/smiles-trial> (accessed Dec 2019). **4.** NPS Medicinewise. Antidepressant medicines explained. Available at: <https://www.nps.org.au/consumers/antidepressant-medicines-explained> (accessed July 2019). **5.** Malhi G, et al. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) clinical practice guidelines for mood disorders. Aust N Z J Psychiatry 2015; 49: 1087–206. **6.** Mayo Clinic Shared Decision Making National Resource Center. Depression Medication Choice. Available at: <https://shareddecisions.mayoclinic.org/decision-aid-information/decision-aids-for-chronic-disease/depression-medication-choice> (accessed December 2019).

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8 Cato Street Hawthorn, VIC 3122.
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For more information contact Medical
Information on 1800 153 590.



Depression Management

Important
considerations
to discuss with
your doctor.

What is depression?

Depression can happen to anyone and is a common medical condition with **one in seven** Australians experiencing depression in their lifetime.¹ It can cause a low mood that doesn't go away and a loss of interest and pleasure in nearly everything you do.

It's **important to get help** to manage depression and your GP can work with you to help with the best treatment strategy for you.

What is Shared Decision Making?

It's common to have concerns about how to best manage your depression.

Shared Decision Making encourages an ongoing discussion with your doctor to choose a treatment plan based on your personal preferences and goals.

This Shared Decision Making model can also help you stick with your plan and get the most out of your treatment.



Ask your doctor about which treatment strategies might be suitable for you

Treatment strategies for depression

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Talking to a counselor can help you change your thinking patterns and improve your coping skills. It has been found to help reduce negative thoughts and depressed feelings. CBT is also well suited to being delivered electronically (often called e-therapies).

Can diet and exercise help to improve my mood?

Some studies have found exercise to be helpful for mild to moderate depression in adults. It can be an important lifestyle change in combination with other treatments.²

Additionally, research has found that healthy eating is associated with improvements in depression symptoms.³

Both exercise and diet are now understood to play an important role in improving mental health.

See the back for a QR code to access a handy 'Mental Health Grocery List' developed by the Food & Mood Centre.

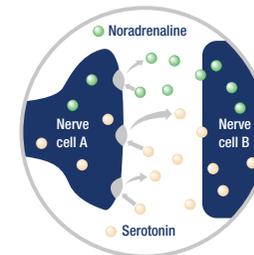
Antidepressant Treatment

Your doctor may discuss antidepressant treatment as an appropriate strategy to help treat your depression.

What are antidepressants?

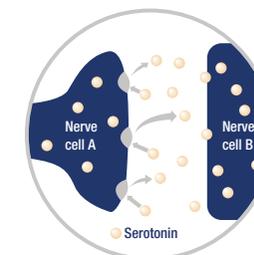
Antidepressants are medications prescribed to assist with the management of depression, and sometimes other conditions like anxiety.

Chemicals in your brain, called neurotransmitters, are associated with depression. Most antidepressants work by affecting three key neurotransmitters – dopamine, noradrenaline and serotonin and some may help to reset our naturally occurring body clock.⁴⁻⁵



Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)

Increase the amount of serotonin in the brain, which may be low in depression.



Serotonin and Noradrenaline Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)

Increase the amount of serotonin and noradrenaline in the brain, which may be low in depression.



Melatonergic Antidepressant

Helps reset your body clock (circadian rhythm), which may be disrupted in depression. Also increases the amount of dopamine and noradrenaline in the brain, which may be low in depression.