



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Depression

Depression may affect your work, relationships, and education so it's important to learn about your diagnosis, symptoms, and treatment options. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Atypical depression	Also called depression with atypical features, this refers to a condition where a person's mood brightens in response to good news or positive events.
Major depressive disorder	Also referred to as clinical depression, major depressive disorder is a significant mental health condition that impacts mood and behavior, as well as various physical functions such as appetite and sleep.
Mood disorder	A general term used to describe disturbances in mood or emotions that interfere with an individual's ability to function.
Persistent Depressive Disorder	Depression that lasts for 2 years or longer. It was previously referred to as dysthymia and chronic major depression.
Seasonal affective disorder	A form of depression most often associated with fewer hours of daylight in the far northern and southern latitudes from late fall to early spring.
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI)	A common type of antidepressant medication. They increase levels of serotonin in the brain.
Psychotic depression	Individuals have the same symptoms of major depression but also have psychotic symptoms, such as hallucinations, delusions, or paranoia.
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	The handbook that classifies mental disorders that are diagnosed by physicians and mental health professionals.
Bipolar disorder	A type of mood disorder that causes mood shifts and alterations in energy and activity levels.
With mixed features	This specifier can be present in bipolar and depressive disorders. It allows for the presence of manic symptoms as part of the depression diagnosis in patients who do not meet the full criteria for a manic episode.
With anxious distress	This specifier is used when anxiety is present and it impacts prognosis, treatment choices, and a patient's response to treatment.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage depression.

About Symptoms

- Which of my symptoms indicate that I may be depressed?
- Could depression be contributing to my physical health symptoms, like pain?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- Do you need to rule out any medical conditions that might be causing my depression?
- Is depression hereditary?
- Could my lifestyle, such as my diet or sleep habits, be contributing to my depression?
- Could my depression be triggered by medication I'm taking?

About Diagnosis

- How do you determine if I have depression?
- What kind of depression do I have?
- Should I undergo any type of testing?

About Treatment

- Should I see a specialist, such as a psychiatrist?
- Should I take medication to address my symptoms? If so, how long does it take to work and how will you know which medication is most likely to work for me? What side effects should I look out for?
- What can I do to manage my symptoms without or alongside medication?
- Can you prescribe medication to treat a specific symptom, such as my trouble sleeping?
- Can talk therapy help me?
- Are there any alternative treatments for depression?
- Will my depression ever really go away?
