



## Teen Depression

Depression may be defined as the state of extreme melancholy, where patients who exhibit this condition may develop severe apathy towards their environment. Their physical activity may lessen considerably and can even spend hours in any single posture.

Till date, treatment was only done by routine prescription of antidepressants and psychotherapy. More severe cases were given electro-convulsive therapy.

Depression in adolescents is in many ways quite similar to that of adults. The DSM-IV manual also cites the criteria for depression in adults and adolescents to be same. Younger teenagers may not be able to express their feelings as the older ones and hence the symptoms of depression may be expressed as phobias, bodily complaints, behavior problems, or as separation anxieties. Teens suffering from psychotic depressions may report hallucinations.

Some common symptoms of teen depression may be the following:

- Decline in academic achievements.
- Behavioral problems in friendship.
- Withdrawing from contact with family and other people.
- Lack of enthusiasm and energy. Difficulty in self-motivation.
- Unnecessary aggression, anger and rage.
- Report of feelings of sadness and helplessness.
- Over-reaction to criticism.
- Feels incapable of living up to the parental expectations.
- Lacks self-esteem and suffers from guilt.
- Unable to concentrate or take decisions.
- Feeling restless and agitated.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Having suicidal thoughts or suicidal attempts.

**Adolescence depression may be caused by any of the following factors: Teen Depression**

Adolescence is the time when young people experiment with cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. Often in growing young men and women this experimenting leads to habit formation resulting in substance abuse. Research had shown that it is possible to treat this problem completely without any difficulty. However, studies also show that teenagers lean towards substance abuse due to their inability to deal with certain psychological problems like depression, etc most of the time.

In one of the largest study ever conducted on teenagers, it has been shown that persistent depressive symptoms often remain even after they had been treated for substance abuse. Moreover, this was one of the core reasons for adolescents to turn into drug or alcohol addicts.

**Major mental disorders**

Mental disorders in adolescents are much more common than what parents regard it to be. Research says 64% of the adolescents have increased chance of having at least one mental illness, and 15% of them are vulnerable to depressive symptoms.

Some common mental disorders that may generate feelings of depression in young teenagers are major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder.

### **Post-traumatic stress disorder**

Research says that nearly three-fourth of the adolescents who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder also suffer from major depression.

Post traumatic stress disorder is a form of anxiety disorder that may affect people after being exposed to a terrifying event or situation that has been responsible for causing grievous personal harm. Some of such traumatic events may be violent assaults, natural or human being caused disasters, accidents or wars. Turn into drug or alcohol addicts.

### **Sleep deprivation**

On any school day, teens get up from bed by 6:30 am and go to bed by 10:30 pm, which, can stretch for another one or two hours on days before their examinations. Sleeping less can cause teenagers to experience stress, as adolescents need biologically more sleep than the adults. Apart from sleeplessness making them feel like zombies in the morning, it can also cause drowsiness, fatigue, and poor concentration in schools. Scientists believe that such feelings could affect the emotions of the teenagers and make them more prone to depression.

### **Other causes**

Teen depression is also related to other causes like hereditary tendencies to have depressive feelings. However major environmental stimulation is required to trigger a depression in teenagers. Adolescents often point out to parental abuse, neglect, rejection and parental conflict for feeling low or depressed.

### **How parents can help their depressed teens?**

Adolescents suffering from depression or suicidal tendencies can be cured by timely medical interventions. Teens who commit suicide often talk about it before the attempt. Parents should not dismiss such thoughts as mere threats and should instead take them very seriously and give the child the time they need to open up. If there has been any previous attempt, care should be taken to keep any potential weapon out of their reach.

Parents often feel that asking their children about their depressive feelings or suicidal attempts accounts to "putting ideas into their heads". This may not be true because talking to your children about their feelings can only reflect the care and concern of parents.

Substance abuse  
Mental disorders  
Post-traumatic stress disorder  
Sleep deprivation