

Telling your GP about your aches and pains can be much easier than saying you feel sad. But if you keep your feelings secret, your depression is unlikely to be diagnosed and could get worse without treatment.

You will not be wasting your GP's time by going to them with something that's not physical. When you are sick you go to the doctor and depression is an illness just as deserving of help.

Depression is not a normal part of ageing and you don't have to put up with it. Your GP can tell you about a range of treatments available from talking therapies to medication and older people respond just as well to them as anyone else.

The sooner you seek treatment, the sooner the depression will lift. So put aside your worries and have a sensitive and confidential chat with your GP using our helpful tips.

Make an appointment today



Contact us

Many Age Concerns provide a range of services that support older people such as:

- ◆ Information and advice
- ◆ Day centres and lunch clubs
- ◆ Befriending schemes
- ◆ Bereavement support
- ◆ Transport to activities
- ◆ Exercise programmes
- ◆ A benefits check

For more information please contact our free National Information Line on 0800 00 99 66, or your local Age Concern.

Your local Age Concern

AGE
Concern

“Down, but not out” campaign

Age Concern England, Astral House,
1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER

Phone: 020 8765 7200

Email: dbno@ace.org.uk

<http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/downbutnotout>

Registered Charity no 261794

December 2008

PA024/11/08 50,000

Discussing depression with your GP



AGE
Concern

Discussing depression with your GP

Make your first appointment

Book a time with your GP or the practice nurse if you would feel more comfortable. Think about taking a trusted family member, friend or carer along to support you.

Be honest

If you think you may be depressed, say so. There is no need to feel worried or embarrassed. Depression is an illness that any one of us could get at any time. It is the third most common reason for visiting the GP so they are quite used to hearing about it and treating it.

Put aside any embarrassments

It is important to be open and honest with your GP. For example, you may be asked if you drink a lot. It is unlikely you will say anything they haven't heard before. What you say is confidential.

Begin with your history of depression

Give as much information as you can about when the depression started. Was it linked to a stressful event in your life, such as the loss of a loved one? Have you had it before? Has anyone in your family had it?

Discuss your symptoms

Make a list of all your symptoms and take it with you. You can use the checklist in Age Concern's leaflet: *Spotting the Signs of Depression*. Let your GP know when the symptoms are worse, eg first thing in the morning, the afternoon or just before bed, or when faced with particular situations or people.

Mention your medications

Sometimes depression can be a side effect of another illness or medication. Tell your GP what you're taking, eg prescription, over-the-counter and any vitamins, supplements or herbs.

Understand your depression

If you are diagnosed with depression, try to find out as much as you can about it.

Questions for your GP might be:

- ◆ How will my depression affect me?
- ◆ Do you have information I can take away?
- ◆ What kind of local support is there for me and my carer?
- ◆ Is there a number I can call if I need help or advice 'out of hours'?

Be open and honest with your GP



Exercise can help beat depression



Discuss different treatments

There are several different treatments available for depression so it's important you work with your GP to decide what's best for you.

These could be:

- ◆ Talking therapies (like counselling)
- ◆ Medication (antidepressants)
- ◆ Self-help therapies (like exercise)

Questions for your GP might be:

- ◆ What treatment do you think will work best for me and why? What does it involve?
- ◆ How can I get it and when can I start?
- ◆ How long am I likely to need it for?
- ◆ When can I expect to feel better again?
- ◆ [If you are prescribed medication] What are the possible side effects?

Book a follow-up visit

Remember to book a follow-up appointment to discuss how your treatment is going, how you are feeling in yourself, changes in your mood and any side effects of medication.