



# Depression in the Elderly

1400 Rosewood Dr,  
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800-ALZ-GATE (800-259-4283) Alzheimer's Support Group Helpline

## Depression in Older Adults

Feeling down once in a while is normal but if those feelings last more than a few weeks or months it may be depression. Depression is common in people with Alzheimer's and dementia.

**Depression is a medical condition that needs to be treated by a professional.**

For older people, sadness does not mean depression. Older persons may feel numb or have lost interest in activities they once brought joy. They may not talk about depression.

### Depression Symptoms

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty feelings
- Hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, worthlessness
- Irritability, restlessness, fidgety
- Loss of interest in sex
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Sleep patterns change or unable to sleep
- Change in eating habits
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

### How Depression is Treated

Depression in older adults responds well to a combination of medication and talk therapy.

## Steps to Avoid and Prevent Depression

- Participate in activities that bring you joy.
- Develop good sleep hygiene that allows 7-9 hours of sleep at night.
- **DO NOT ISOLATE!**
- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid added sugar and salt in foods.

Crisis Text Line

741741

## Exercise Can Change Your Brain

The brain can control how a person feels or thinks about themselves, it controls motivation, behaviors, and how the body responds to stress.

**Physical activity is one of the best ways to regulate how the nervous system operates. Start slow and go.**

**Always get approval from healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.**



### Feeling Suicidal?

- Do not isolate
- Call a trusted friend or family member
- Call 911 for immediate help.
- Make an appointment with healthcare provider

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
**800-273-8255 (TALK)**  
**800-799-4889 (TTY)**

**Dealing with depression effectively is a mark not of weakness, but of strength.**

**Andrew Solomon,**  
**Politics Writer**