

Dialysis and Depression

What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way one thinks, feels, and behaves.

Why are you at risk?

Depression affects 10% of the general population. However, it is present in 20-30% of dialysis patients. If left untreated, depression can lead to hospitalizations, missed and shortened dialysis treatments, and even death.

What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

Symptoms vary from person to person. Depression is defined by having more than one symptom for more than two weeks.

- Sadness
- Trouble sleeping (either too much or too little)
- Hopelessness
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Weight loss or weight gain that occurs without trying
- Problems concentrating or making decisions
- Tiredness or low energy
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Thoughts of suicide

What do I do if I experience any of these symptoms?

Talk to your doctor and dialysis social worker. Screenings can be done to evaluate levels of depression and review treatment options.

What are the treatment options for depression?

The ideal treatment is medication and counseling. Your medical team can help you decide which treatments are best. The doctor can prescribe a medication called an anti-depressant. The social worker can meet to talk about symptoms and provide support or, if needed, refer you to a therapist in the community.

How can I reduce the symptoms?

- Exercise
- Talk to a trusted relative or friend
- Eat a healthy diet
- Get plenty of sleep
- Do not use alcohol or drugs

For More Information:

- University of Michigan Psychiatric Emergency Services: Crisis Phone Service 734-936-5900
- University of Michigan Depression Center: 800-475-6424
www.depressioncenter.org or www.depressiontoolkit.org
- Mental Health America: 800-969-6642 or www.nmha.org

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