What is Depression?

Symptoms of a Depressive Episode

- depressed mood
- loss of interest or pleasure
- significant weight change
- diminished concentration
- sleep difficulties
- fatigue nearly every day
- feelings of worthlessness
- recurring thoughts of death

Symptoms must cause significant distress. Symptoms must last for at least two weeks.

Demographics

- Women are 2x more likely to develop depression.
- About 1 in 10 people will experience depression during their lifetime.
- Most people experience their first depressive episode between ages 20 and 30.

Risks for Depression

- Family history of depression or similar disorders.
- Poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and other stressful life events.
- Regular drug and alcohol use.

Psychotherapy (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)

- CBT works by changing self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.
- CBT has been found to be equally, if not more effective than medicine in many cases.
- CBT is the most researched form of psychotherapy for depression.

Medication (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)

- SSRIs increase the level of serotonin (a chemical related to depression) in the brain.
- Studies suggest that SSRIs are the most effective when used to treat severe depression.
- SSRIs don’t work overnight—it might take up to 6 weeks before they reach their full effect.

A combination of both psychotherapy and medication has been found to be the most effective treatment for depression.

Other Facts

- Over ½ of those diagnosed with depression also suffer from anxiety.
- 60% of those who die by suicide suffer from depression or a related mood disorder.
- Physical exercise has been found to have a significant antidepressant effect.
- Depressive episodes also occur during bipolar disorder alongside manic episodes.