

# Mind+Body

## Are you depressed?

KAISER PERMANENTE NORTHWEST REGION • HEALTH ENGAGEMENT AND WELLNESS SERVICES



### Everyone feels depressed now and then

However, when depressed feelings hang on for several weeks or months, or if they interfere with your daily life, clinical depression may be the problem.

Clinical depression is more than just occasionally feeling blue. It is a medical illness that can be severe and life-threatening. Even mild symptoms of depression can be troublesome if they continue for long periods of time.

This quiz can help determine how serious your symptoms are and what steps you may want to take.

### Symptom checklist

In the past two weeks, have you been...

	Yes	No
1. Losing interest in things you usually enjoy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Feeling down or helpless?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Feeling a loss of energy or feeling tired all the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Experiencing a decrease, or increase, in appetite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Feeling worthless or guilty?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Having problems concentrating or thinking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Feeling slowed down, or restless and fidgety?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Having thoughts of hurting yourself or suicide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered yes to:

- Item 9, call your doctor or suicide-prevention hotline immediately.
- Five or more questions, you may have clinical depression. Speak with your doctor as soon as possible.
- Three or four questions, you may be experiencing milder symptoms of depression. Try some of the self-help options and resources described in this brochure. If your symptoms persist, speak with your doctor about next steps.

### Your Health Online:

#### shortcuts to better health

- [kp.org/depression](http://kp.org/depression) – get basic facts about depression, treatment, and self-care steps.
- [kp.org/overcomingdepression](http://kp.org/overcomingdepression) – get free digital coaching from this HealthMedia® program. It assesses where you are and what you need, then provides tailored tips, tools, and email messages to help you manage depression.
- [kp.org/classes](http://kp.org/classes) – find programs, services, and products.
- [kp.org/health](http://kp.org/health) – health encyclopedia.
- [kp.org/healthdecisions](http://kp.org/healthdecisions) – learn about health care decision options.
- [kp.org/healthyliving](http://kp.org/healthyliving) – tools to help you live well.
- [kp.org/audio](http://kp.org/audio) – listen to or download free guided imagery podcasts.
- [kp.org/myhealthmanager](http://kp.org/myhealthmanager) – email your doctor, view lab results, refill medications, and more.
- [kp.org/video](http://kp.org/video) – view health videos online.
- [kp.org/espanol](http://kp.org/espanol) – content in Spanish.
- [twitter.com/HealthyLivingNW](https://twitter.com/HealthyLivingNW) – find local activities and events to help you get out and have fun.



All plans offered and underwritten by  
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.  
500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232.

Please note that many depression symptoms can occur with normal grief after a significant loss, and do not indicate a mental health disorder. If you've experienced a recent loss and are struggling, talk with your doctor about bereavement support.

## Managing depression

Clinical depression is more common than most people realize, affecting one out of every five people. There are effective treatments for depression.

- **Medications** can relieve mild to moderate symptoms. Medication is highly recommended for treating severe depression.
- **Counseling** can help you understand and change your feelings, behavior, and relationships with others.
- **Classes** or groups provide information about depression and an opportunity to get support from others.
- **Self-help** strategies, such as those listed below, can help you manage symptoms. If you try one treatment or medication for several months and it does not work for you, try another. Do not give up. You can feel better!

## Self-help strategies

If you're battling the blues, there are immediate steps you can take that will have a positive effect on your mood. If you are suffering from depression, however, these self-care measures are unlikely to be enough. You'll need help from a medical professional as well.

## Things to try

- Schedule some fun into your day. Make time for pleasurable activities – especially those you have enjoyed in the past – even if you don't feel like it.
- Reach out. Spend time with positive, supportive people. Or offer to do something helpful for someone else.
- Stay busy. Rearrange a room, clean a closet, write a letter. Action can reduce helpless feelings.
- Think positive thoughts. Challenge negative thoughts with statements such as "I am hopeful," or "Things will get better." Write these statements down and re-read them (even if you don't believe them yet).
- Move around. Regular exercise can help lift your mood, reduce stress, and raise your energy level.
- Break tasks into small steps that are easy for you to manage. This may help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed.
- Please remember that alcohol and drugs won't help. Using alcohol and drugs can make depression worse.
- Contact the **Mental Health Department's** telephone service that links members with assessment and treatment options:  
Portland area ..... 503-249-3434    Vancouver area ..... 360-571-3133  
Salem area ..... 503-588-5955    Longview-Kelso area ..... 360-636-6235



## Health Engagement and Wellness Services

Contact Health Engagement and Wellness Services for a variety of resources. You also can get details in a *Healthy Living* catalog, available online at [kp.org/healthylivingcatalog/nw](http://kp.org/healthylivingcatalog/nw) or at any medical or dental office.

- **Talk with a Health Coach** for support and motivation to reach your health goals. This service, free for members, is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call the number below and select option 2.
- **Order a Cultivating Health® kit** – *Weight Management, Managing Diabetes, Freedom from Tobacco, Improving Your Sleep, Managing Stress, and Everyday Fitness*. Call the number below and select option 1.

**503-286-6816 or  
1-866-301-3866 (toll free)**

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you are having recurrent thoughts of harming yourself or others, please contact your doctor immediately.