



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Teens Recovering From Depression: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions



Taking good care of yourself is important as you recover from depression. In time, your symptoms will fade as your treatment takes hold. Do not give up. Instead, focus your energy on getting better.

Your mood will improve. It just takes some time. Focus on things that can help you feel better, such as being with friends and family, eating well, and getting enough rest. But take things slowly. Do not do too much too soon. You will begin to feel better gradually.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Be realistic

- If you have a large task to do, break it up into smaller steps you can handle, and just do what you can.
- Think about putting off important decisions until your depression has lifted. If you have plans that will have a major impact on your life, such as dropping out of school or choosing a college, try to wait a bit. Talk it over with friends and family who can help you look at the overall picture.
- Reach out to people for help. Do not isolate yourself. Let your family and friends help you. Find people you can trust and confide in, and talk to them.
- Be patient, and be kind to yourself. Remember that depression is not your fault and is not something you can overcome with willpower alone. Treatment is necessary for depression, just like for any other illness. Feeling better takes time, and your mood will improve little by little.

Stay active

- Stay busy and get outside. Join a school club or take part in school activities. Become a volunteer.
- Get plenty of exercise every day. Go for a walk or jog, ride your bike, or play sports with friends. Talk with your doctor about an exercise program. Exercise can help with mild depression.
- Go to a movie or concert. Take part in a church activity or other social gathering. Go to a sports event.
- Ask a friend to do things with you. You could play a computer game, go shopping, or listen to music, for example.

Follow your treatment plan

- If your doctor prescribed medicine, take it exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
 - You may start to feel better within 1 to 3 weeks of taking antidepressant medicine. But it can take as many as 6 to 8 weeks to see more improvement.
 - If you do not notice any improvement in 3 weeks, talk to your doctor.
 - Antidepressants can make you feel tired, dizzy, or nervous. Some people have dry mouth, constipation, headaches, or diarrhea. Many of these side effects are mild and will go away on their own after you have been taking the medicine for a few weeks. Some may last longer. Talk to your doctor if side effects are bothering you too much. You might be able to try a different medicine.
- Do not take medicines that have not been prescribed for you. They may interfere with medicines you may be taking for depression, or they may make your depression worse.
- If you have a counselor, go to all your appointments.

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- Keep the numbers for these national suicide hotlines: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) and 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433). If you or someone you know talks about suicide or feeling hopeless, get help right away.

Take care of yourself

- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein. If you have lost your appetite, eat small snacks rather than large meals.
- Do not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep. If you have problems sleeping:
 - Go to bed at the same time every night, and get up at the same time every morning.
 - Keep your bedroom dark and quiet.
 - Do not exercise after 5:00 p.m.
 - Avoid drinks with caffeine after 5:00 p.m.
- Avoid sleeping pills unless they are prescribed by the doctor treating your depression. Sleeping pills may make you groggy during the day, and they may interact with other medicine you are taking.
- If you have any other illnesses, such as diabetes, make sure to continue with your treatment. Tell your doctor about all of the medicines you take, including those with or without a prescription.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You are thinking about suicide or are threatening suicide.
- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.
- You hear or see things that aren't real.
- You think or speak in a bizarre way that is not like your usual behavior.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You are drinking a lot of alcohol or using illegal drugs.
- You are talking or writing about death.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

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- You find it hard or it's getting harder to deal with school, a job, family, or friends.
- You think your treatment is not helping or you are not getting better.
- Your symptoms get worse or you get new symptoms.
- You have any problems with your antidepressant medicines, such as side effects, or you are thinking about stopping your medicine.
- You are having manic behavior, such as having very high energy, needing less sleep than normal, or showing risky behavior such as spending money you don't have or abusing others verbally or physically.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>.

Enter **L325** in the search box to learn more about "**Teens Recovering From Depression: Care Instructions.**"

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