

ENCOURAGEMENT  
HOPE UNDERSTANDING  
FREEDOM PLEASURE RELIEF  
**DEPRESSION AID**  
INSPIRATION RELAXATION  
GUIDANCE TRUST HELP  
CONFIDENCE EXHILARATION  
**ACCOMPLISHMENT**  
STIMULATING LIGHTENING  
COMFORT CLEAN REVITALISING  
**OPTIMISM PLEASURE**  
WHOLENESS SOOTHING  
QUALITY CARE PROTECTION  
SUPPORT WELLBEING VIGOR  
HAPPINESS VITALITY REST  
GUIDANCE TRUST HELP  
DEVELOPMENT NOURISHING  
**HOPE HEALTH LOVE**  
REFRESHING STIMULATING  
**HEALING AND RELAXATION**  
**SANCTUARY ENERGY**  
STRENGTH EDUCATION SAFE  
ASSIST MAINTAIN AID  
**CARE**

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Depression is a common disorder. This leaflet tells you what depression is, how to spot its symptoms and what treatment is available.

## **What is depression?**

Depression is a medical disorder just like high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma. It's an abnormal mood associated with specific and reversible chemical changes in the brain. Depression is not a sign of weakness, nor is it a state you can just snap out of.

## **Who gets depression?**

Nobody is immune to depression and it can happen at any age. In fact, around 10% of men and 25% of women will develop depression at some point in their life.

## **What triggers depression?**

For many people, depression is triggered by a stressful event, alcohol or drug use, or an unresolved long-term difficulty. However, in some people there is no obvious trigger.

## **What are the symptoms?**

You should not confuse depression with sadness and loss, feelings that often pass quickly. These feelings are often understandable and do not normally prevent you from coping with your normal life.

The symptoms of depression are different. They include a significantly lower mood, irritability and not being able to enjoy usually pleasurable activities. A depressed person has negative thoughts about themselves, the world and the future — thoughts that cause a loss of self-confidence. Physical symptoms include changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and loss of interest in sex. People with depression have reduced energy levels, leading to fatigue (extreme tiredness), lack of activity and difficulty concentrating.

## **How will depression affect my life?**

Symptoms can be intense and disrupt your work, social and family life. In the Medical Outcomes Study, depression was found to be as socially debilitating as coronary artery disease (that is, you may find it difficult to mix with people or may not feel comfortable leaving home).

# SOOTHING RELAXATION REVITALISING ENERGY HOPE HEALING AND SANCTUARY PEACE

## **Why should I have a psychiatric assessment?**

Just as a patient sees a doctor about a physical illness, a psychiatrist will look at your symptoms and explore how they have developed.

A psychiatrist will try to find out what makes you likely to suffer depression. Are you generally more negative or do you suffer from low self-esteem? Does depression run in your family? Are there unresolved long-term problems? The way you use alcohol and drugs, both medicinal and recreational, has important influences on your mood. You must provide information about your medical history as some illnesses, like an underactive thyroid, may cause depression and it helps the psychiatrist to decide what medicine is most suitable.

The psychiatrist will look for a wide range of psychiatric symptoms. One of the most important is to know if you are so depressed you may commit suicide.

## **Should I go into care?**

Most people can be treated as an outpatient. However, some people want more intensive treatment and support within either a daycare programme or as an inpatient, at least until they feel signs of improvement.

## **What types of treatment are available?**

Although it's hard for you to believe, you can overcome your depression by receiving treatment. The treatments most commonly used are cognitive behaviour therapy — a type of psychotherapy — and antidepressants. Both have been proven to be successful.

### **How does cognitive behaviour therapy work?**

Cognitive behaviour therapy tackles your negative thoughts. For example, when something bad happens depressed people blame themselves, but when good things happen they tell themselves that they've just been lucky. They also assume that other people are reacting negatively to them. Cognitive behaviour therapy helps people think in a more balanced way and challenges a person's assumptions about their lives. It aims to identify and change aspects of behaviour that may cause or prolong symptoms of depression.

### **What change will cognitive behaviour therapy have?**

By helping you change the way you think about life, you'll be able to accept failures more easily and take credit for your achievements. Cognitive behaviour therapy aims to give you skills for life, reducing the likelihood of you becoming depressed again.

### **Will cognitive behaviour therapy work for all cases?**

Although cognitive behaviour therapy is likely to form the basis of a psychotherapy programme, other forms of therapy may be helpful. For example, if you were abused as a child, or you are finding it difficult to come to terms with a death, this would need to be dealt with in its own right.

### **When are antidepressants used?**

Antidepressant medication will be the first line of treatment if:

- your depression is severe or comes and goes;
- you've responded well to medication in the past;
- there's a history of depression in your family; or
- you have not responded to psychotherapy.

# ON NOURISHING QUALITY ENT HELP CARE GUIDANCE S SOOTHING STIMULATING

## **Which antidepressants will I be given?**

There are many different antidepressants. The choice of medicines is based on a number of factors, and we will discuss this with you and possibly members of your family.

## **How long will antidepressants take to work?**

Antidepressants take time to have an effect, often a number of weeks, because they're helping nerve cells recover and resume their usual role in regulating mood.

## **Are antidepressants dangerous?**

Antidepressants are not dangerous when you take them as prescribed. They are not addictive and can relieve your depression effectively. We will tell you about the possible side effects, but it is unlikely that you will have any.

## **What can I do to help myself?**

Self help can make a difference. Joining a self help group is a great way to discover you are not alone and are not the only one to suffer from self-blame, rage and despair. Try to eat regularly and have a good diet, including fresh fruit and vegetables. Exercise will help relieve stress and tension, whether aerobic exercise such as jogging or more relaxing exercise such as yoga.

Please remember the following.

- Depression is an illness, not a sign of weakness
- Treatment is effective and there are many treatment options available
- There is a suitable treatment for every person
- The aim of treatment is to get 100% well and stay well

## Self help

### Recommended reading

- 'Feeling good – the new mood therapy' by David Burns
- 'Overcoming depression' by Paul Gilbert (Robinson)
- 'Overcoming low self-esteem' by Melanie Fennel (Robinson)
- 'Overcoming mood swings' by Jan Scott (Robinson)
- 'Overcoming shame' by Windy Dryden (Sheldon)
- 'Mind over mood' by Christine Padesky and Greenberg (Guildford)

## Finding help

Contacting your GP is often the easiest way to get help and further treatment. He or she may offer you counselling or refer you to a specialist for further assessment. This may lead to outpatient treatment or, if more serious, day or inpatient treatment.

If you're worried about talking to your GP, consider writing down your concerns and questions. You can:

- take a friend or family member with you;
- see another doctor in the practice; or
- join a new GP practice.

The type of professional support offered will depend on the services that are available in your area and the arrangements that your primary care trust (PCT) have with other health authorities or private providers. Treatment for depression is also available privately through the Priory Group.

If you feel that you or a close relative are affected by depression and would like help or more information, you can ask your GP or contact any of the following organisations.

<b>Depression Alliance</b>	0845 123 23 20 ( <a href="http://www.depressionalliance.org">www.depressionalliance.org</a> )
<b>NHS Direct (England and Wales)</b>	0845 4647 ( <a href="http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk">www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk</a> )
<b>NHS 24 (Scotland)</b>	08454 242424 ( <a href="http://www.nhs24.com">www.nhs24.com</a> )
<b>The Samaritans</b>	08457 909090 ( <a href="http://www.samaritans.co.uk">www.samaritans.co.uk</a> )
<b>Priory</b>	0845 4 PRIORY 0845 4 774679 ( <a href="http://www.priorygroup.com">www.priorygroup.com</a> )

If you are interested in receiving treatment from us, your GP will be able to refer you.

If you or your relative have private medical insurance your insurer will probably insist that your GP refers you to us.

# COMFORT REVITALISING INSPIRATION CLEAN ENCOURAGEMENT FREEDOM PLEASURE RELIEF

## Why should I choose Priory?

### Our service

At Priory, our committed and professional staff provide the highest standards of care, understanding and service for everyone. This service brings hope and confidence, allowing our patients to take control of their lives within a safe and secure environment.

### Expertise and innovation

Through our close links with the public and private sectors, we've developed the expertise and innovation to offer consistent and successful treatment. And, as Europe's leading independent provider of specialist mental health, neuro-rehabilitation and special education services, we bring experience and an excellent reputation.

**We admit patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

This document has been created by  
Dr Jeremy Broadhead MA Mphil MRCPsych,  
The Depression Alliance ([www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)) and  
Plain English Campaign ([www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)).

The Crystal Mark applies to wording only.



### The Priory Hospital Altrincham

Rappax Road, Hale, Cheshire, WA15 0NX  
Phone: 0161 904 0050 Fax: 0161 980 4322

### The Priory Hospital Brighton & Hove

14-18 New Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 4FH  
Phone: 01273 747 464 Fax: 01273 727 321

### The Priory Hospital Bristol

Heath House Lane, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1EQ  
Phone: 0117 952 5255 Fax: 0117 952 5552

### The Priory Hospital Chelmsford

Stump Lane, Springfield Green, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 7SJ  
Phone: 01245 345 345 Fax: 01245 346 177

### The Priory Hospital Glasgow

38-40 Mansionhouse Road, Glasgow, G41 3DW  
Phone: 0141 636 6116 Fax: 0141 636 5151

### The Priory Hospital Hayes Grove

Prestons Road, Hayes, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7AS  
Phone: 020 8462 7722 Fax: 020 8462 5028

### The Priory Hospital North London

Grovelands House, The Bourne, Southgate, London, N14 6RA  
Phone: 020 8882 8191 Fax: 020 8447 8138

### The Priory Clinic Nottingham

Ransom Road, Nottingham, NG3 5GS  
Phone: 0115 9693 388 Fax: 0115 9693 381

### The Priory Hospital Preston

Rosemary Lane, Bartle, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 0HB  
Phone: 01772 691 122 Fax: 01772 691 246

### The Priory Hospital Roehampton

Priory Lane, Roehampton, London, SW15 5JJ  
Phone: 020 8876 8261 Fax: 020 8392 2632

### The Priory Hospital Southampton

Hythe Road, Marchwood, Southampton, SO40 4WU  
Phone: 023 8084 0044 Fax: 023 8020 7554

### The Priory Ticehurst House

Ticehurst, Wadhurst, East Sussex, TN5 7HU  
Phone: 01580 200 391 Fax: 01580 201 006

### The Priory Hospital Woking

Chobham Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2QF  
Phone: 01483 489 211 Fax: 01483 797 053

### Woodbourne Priory Hospital

21 Woodbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B17 8BY  
Phone: 0121 434 4343 Fax: 0121 434 3270

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# PRIORY

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Priory Group, Priory House, Randalls Way,  
Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7TP

Phone: 01372 860 400 Fax: 01372 860 401

Email: [info@priorygroup.com](mailto:info@priorygroup.com) [www.priorygroup.com](http://www.priorygroup.com)