

If you think you might have depression, you are not alone.

An estimate of more than 17 million U.S. adults experienced at least one major depressive episode in 2017. One in every four patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease experience depression following surgery, and nearly one in five IBD patients develop depression or anxiety within six years of their IBD diagnosis. Depression is a common mental health disorder, and chronic illness can increase your risk of developing depression.

Some signs of depression are:

- Feeling sad, empty or hopeless
- Irritability, frustration or angry outbursts
- Sleep problems
- Appetite disturbances
- Having trouble with day-to-day activities like school, work, or relationships
- Feeling isolated
- Inability to concentrate
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Thoughts of death

What you can do if you think you might have depression:

Find a therapist

Betterhelp and Talkspace are both online therapy platforms, and Psychology Today has a great resource for finding therapists near you.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

Find joy

Make room in your life for some self-care activities you enjoy like movement, art, music, journaling, gardening, or cooking.

Speak up!

Open up to people you trust and let them be your cheerleaders.

Reach out to a psychiatrist

They can see if medication might be a good option for you.

Avoid alcohol

Alcohol and other addictive substances can make depression worse.

Tend your body

Eat a balanced diet, stick to a consistent sleep schedule, and exercise regularly.



Conversations about mental health can be hard, but you can do hard things!

Opening up about how you're feeling gives people the opportunity to support you. If you are still uncomfortable bringing up your feelings to someone you know, there are resources that exist to help you.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Local Chapters

Connection and support can be an invaluable piece of suicide prevention. AFSP has local chapters in all 50 states. Find one near you and browse their full website for how you can make a difference, get education about suicide prevention and more.

<https://afsp.org/find-a-local-chapter/>

Find Your Words

With a focus on depression awareness, Find Your Words empowers individuals to have conversations about mental health, to get help for themselves and to support others.

<https://findyourwords.org/>

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is a training course that teaches participants the skills "to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders".

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

Make It OK

The "Make It OK" campaign is focused on reducing the stigma of mental illness. This website offers tips for talking about mental illness, education about reducing stigma, stories from real people, podcasts and a whole host of resources and tools for you to utilize as you seek support.

<https://makeitok.org/>

Man Therapy

Man Therapy is specifically geared toward working age men, providing a space where it's unquestionably masculine to seek help and support for problems, mental health and suicide.

<https://mantherapy.org/about>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI raises awareness of mental illnesses and provides support and education to individuals and families who are affected by mental illness.

<https://www.nami.org/>

National Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

Use this as a resource to find substance use/addiction and mental health treatment facilities in the United States or U.S. territories.

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator.html>

Mental Health America (MHA)

MHA is a nonprofit which uses advocacy, education resources and services to promote mental health and prevent mental illness.

<https://www.mhanational.org/>

Help Guide

This organization provides evidence-based information and self-help tools to empower people to improve their mental health.

<https://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.htm>

References:
Ananthakrishnan, A. N., Gainer, V. S., Cai, T., Perez, R. G., Cheng, S. C., Savova, G., Chen, P., Szolovits, P., Xia, Z., De Jager, P. L., Shaw, S., Churchill, S., Karlson, E. W., Kohane, I., Perlis, R. H., Plenge, R. M., Murphy, S. N., & Liao, K. P. (2013). Similar risk of depression and anxiety following surgery or hospitalization for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*, 108(4), 594–601. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ajg.2012.471>

Choi, K., Chun, J., Han, K., Park, S., Soh, H., Kim, J., Lee, J., Lee, H. J., Im, J. P., & Kim, J. S. (2019). Risk of anxiety and depression in patients with inflammatory bowel disease: A nationwide, population-based study. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 8(5). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6572298/>

HR NewsWire. (2018, October 10). October is depression awareness month: Know the signs. *The Hub*. <https://hub.jhu.edu/at-work/2018/10/10/depression-awareness-month/>

Mayo Clinic. (2018, February 3). Depression (Major depressive disorder)—Symptoms and causes. *Mayo Clinic*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>

National Institute of Mental Health. (2019, February). Major Depression. *NIMH*. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression.shtml>