

# How Was Your Day?

If you “just don’t feel like yourself,”  
you may be experiencing signs of depression.

Anyone can have depression. In fact, an estimated 1 out of 10 U.S. adults reports depression according to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. It often runs in families but can also happen to someone who doesn't have a family history. It affects men and women of all ages (most often between ages 45-64), races and economic levels. Women have depression twice as often as men. People who have a serious illness are more likely to have depression. You may be surprised to know that depression can even adversely affect the course and outcome of common chronic conditions, such as arthritis, asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Depression is widespread, and it's getting worse.

**Depression is a real medical condition. It causes a person to feel sad and hopeless much of the time. It is different from normal feelings of sadness, grief or low energy.**

Depression is believed to be associated with changes in levels of chemicals in the brain, such as serotonin and norepinephrine. You can have depression one time or many times. The good news is: there are effective treatments that can help you enjoy life again. The sooner you get treatment, the sooner you will feel better.

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## How Was Your Week?

Depression can cause different symptoms in different people, and they may be hard to notice at first. If you think you or a loved one may be depressed, learn more about what symptoms to look for. People who are depressed may:

- **Have little interest or pleasure in doing things.**
- **Feel down, depressed or hopeless.**
- **Have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep or sleeping too much.**
- **Feel tired or have little energy.**
- **Have a poor appetite or overeat.**
- **Feel bad about themselves; or feel that they are a failure and let their friends/family down.**
- **Have trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.**
- **Move or speak so slowly that other people notice. Or, the opposite: being so fidgety or restless that they move around a lot more than usual.**



All of these symptoms can affect your everyday life—at work and home. If you suspect you or a loved one may have depression or have experienced symptoms for at least 2 weeks, talk to your doctor. Don't wait to get help. Even though there are effective treatments for depression, some experts suggest that people often wait over 10 years to seek treatment on average. But there is hope. If more people seek treatment earlier, the costs to the individual, their family and even their employer can be reversed.

## How Was Work Today?

There are human and economic costs associated with depression. The economic cost of depression, which includes lost productivity and increased medical expenses, is estimated to be over \$83 billion each year. In fact, depression is the leading cause of medical disability for individuals aged 14 to 44.

Depression can take a toll on the ability to function and handle responsibilities at work and home.

- **AT WORK**, depression can hurt productivity by reducing the ability to concentrate, organize and work efficiently. It can increase feelings of on-the-job distress, lower job satisfaction and increase absenteeism. According to over 100,000 members who took the Highmark Wellness Profile in 2010, nearly 21% reported experiencing some degree of depression, costing an estimated \$74 million in lost productivity each year.
- **AT HOME**, depression can affect relationships and make social activities or hobbies less enjoyable.

## How Can You Get (or Give) Support?

Sometimes it's difficult for your friends, family and co-workers to understand what it's like to experience depression. Depression goes beyond "feeling blue," and people can't just "snap out of it." Describe your symptoms and experiences with depression with your family and friends. (Or, ask them to share their thoughts with you, if you're the support person.) A good support person can help by:

- Providing emotional support and being a good listener.
- Encouraging ongoing treatment, including medication adherence, when appropriate.
- Going along to doctor and counselor appointments.
- Helping to monitor progress and provide support to stay on treatment.
- Learning about and helping to carry out recommendations for lifestyle changes.
- Encouraging participation in activities, social gatherings and hobbies that once brought pleasure.



### Highmark Member Resources That Can Help

- **Talk with a behavioral health specialist** who can help locate resources, discuss treatment options and help family members. Highmark members should call **1-800-258-9808** and choose **Option 3**. Or, call the toll-free number on the back of your Highmark Member ID card for more information.
- **Enroll in an online health program.** Go to your Member website at [www.highmarkbcbs.com](http://www.highmarkbcbs.com), and follow the instructions to log in. Click the "Your Health" tab, and select "Improve Your Health" to participate in an online program for depression under "Manage a Health Condition."
- **Call Blues On Call<sup>SM</sup>** at 1-888-BLUE(2583)-428 anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for confidential support from a specially-trained Health Coach. Our Health Coaches have access to a variety of resources to assist you, including health guides, educational materials and videos.