



# Feeling Down vs. Depression

Everyone feels down from time to time. That's part of life.

Sometimes, though, it can be a sign of a more serious condition like seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or other forms of depression. How do you know if you're just feeling a little blue or if you have depression?

## What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. It's more than just feeling unhappy for a few days. Depression often has additional symptoms and may last for weeks, months, or longer.

Key symptoms of depression can include persistent sadness and a loss of interest in things you used to enjoy. It can also come with other symptoms, including:

- Unintentional weight loss or weight gain
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling anxious and restless or slowed down and sluggish
- Decreased energy or feeling more tired
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thinking about death or suicide

## Seasonal depression

Seasonal depression is also known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. This type of depression starts as early as late summer or early fall when the amount of daily sunlight begins to decrease. SAD often lasts through winter until spring.

## Other kinds of depression

Other types of depression aren't affected by the change in seasons. Instead, they can be caused by hormonal changes (such as postpartum depression), genetics, certain medications, alcohol, or life events.

## Depression is very treatable

The good news is that depression can be treated in many cases. Don't put off getting help. Talk to a psychiatrist and/or therapist, and get their advice on next steps. If you're thinking of suicide, call 911 or 988 immediately.

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## Tips for Managing Stress

Life's daily demands can cause a surprising amount of stress. Juggling a lot of different responsibilities—parent, employee, spouse, caregiver for a loved one—can make it hard to keep your head above water.

Chronic exposure to stress can contribute to brain changes that may lead to troubles with both body and mind. For example, we know that stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain, heart concerns, and other issues.

### Tips for handling stress

Here are some tips for dealing with stress:

- **Change what you can.** If a specific situation is causing stress on an ongoing basis, do what you can to change it. That may mean scaling back on your commitments, asking for help from others, or getting out of a stressful job or relationship.
- **Prioritize.** Sometimes we can feel like we're failing if we don't cross everything off our lists. There are times when some things just aren't going to get done. Focus on what's truly important to you, and let other things slide.
- **Give yourself time away.** Take yourself out of the environment that is causing you stress, even if it's just for a short time. Take a walk, go to the gym, stop in a coffee shop—anything that takes you out of the situation.
- **Try deep breathing.** Deep abdominal breathing helps to bring down stress hormones.
- **Use mindfulness techniques such as guided imagery or meditation.** This helps to calm your body and your mind.

### Therapy can help

If you've tried managing stress on your own and it just isn't working, therapy may help. A therapist can help you identify the stressors in your life and create a plan for reducing and managing your stress. Reach out to your insurance provider for help locating in-network therapists or counselors.





## Coping with Grief

Whether it stems from the death of a loved one or pet, the last child leaving the nest, the end of a romantic relationship, or another life event, grief can be incredibly painful. That pain can manifest itself not only emotionally but also physically.

The most important thing to remember about grief is that it differs for every person and in every situation. There is no set process or timeline for grief. All you can do is be compassionate to yourself and try to make healthy choices.

### Ways to deal with grief

First, give yourself permission to mourn. There is no way around grief. It's something you will have to work through. In fact, trying to avoid the grieving process can actually make it longer and more draining.

Next, embrace memories, both happy and sad. It might be painful at first, but it will help you move forward.

Also, look for healthy activities that help you feel better. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Seek out caring people
- Express your feelings through art
- Exercise
- Take a soothing shower

### When to seek help

It's perfectly normal for the grieving process to take time, and there's no rulebook for how much; however, sometimes people do need help to recover from a loss. Reach out for help with your grief if you:

- Can't go to work or take care of your family
- Can't eat or sleep normally
- Feel your grief is getting worse
- Have thoughts of suicide or of harming yourself

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# BLUEBERRY BAKED OATS

## Ingredients

- 500 milliliters almond milk
- 200 grams jumbo porridge oats
- 2 tablespoons almond butter
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 small ripe banana, mashed
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- 450 grams blueberries, plus extra to serve
- 30 grams whole, skin-on almonds, roughly chopped
- milk or fat-free yogurt and honey, to serve (optional)

## Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/392°F. Mix all of the ingredients together in a large bowl.
2. Tip the mixture into a 2-liter ovenproof dish, then bake for 30-35 minutes until piping hot in the middle. Serve warm with a little milk or yogurt, honey and extra blueberries, if you like.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Servings
5 minutes	35 minutes	6



## Nutrition Facts

Calories	386
Total Fat	22g
Sodium	.3g
Carbohydrate	34g
Total Sugars	10g
Dietary Fiber	6g
Protein	10g