Depression

There are several treatments for depression that can be used by people with your condition.

We know that when depression is treated, people are more likely to manage their condition, and stay out of hospital. In contrast, people who do not tackle their depression, tend to feel unwell.¹
Feeling down?

Many people who are depressed will recognise the symptoms of depression in themselves. These might include a low mood that goes on for prolonged periods of time, feeling overwhelmed, tearful or unable to enjoy life. However, some people do not realise they have depression because they do not recognise the symptoms.

Depression can affect people in different ways, such as:

- Feelings that stop you getting on with daily life
- Moods and behaviours that affect and upset the people around you
- Loss of interest in things you normally enjoy
- Changes to your sleep pattern
- Feeling that you are hopeless or pointless
- Some people experience physical symptoms, such as headaches and tiredness

If you recognise these signs, or if you simply feel that you are depressed, it is time to talk to your doctor.

There are various options for treating depression, and we know that treatment with medicine or cognitive therapy relieves the symptoms of depression and improves quality of life¹.

There are also self-help techniques that you can try. Read on to find out more.
Self-help tips

If you have only felt low for a short while, or if you are being treated for depression but want to do more to help yourself, here are some self-help techniques that you might find useful:

• **Eat a healthy, heart-friendly diet** and be as active as your health allows (you should always speak to a member of your healthcare team before you change your level of activity). These will increase your sense of well-being and help to lift your mood.

• **Find a way to relax, and do it regularly.** This could be something specific, like breathing techniques or mindfulness. Remember that in mindfulness we pay attention to what is happening in the present moment, without drifting off into the constant chatter or anxious thoughts. Alternatively, you could commit to spending more time doing things you enjoy, that relax you.

• **Keep in touch with your family, friends and community.** If possible, talk with them about your feelings.

• **Some people find that listening to, or playing, music lifts their mood.**

• **Some find that doing things for other people gives them a sense of purpose,** increases their self-esteem and helps them to put things into perspective.

• **Search for new hobbies and interests:** these can both distract and inspire you, and help you to focus your emotions on something positive.
Don’t forget that you can use a diary to keep track of your feelings, and share them with your doctor. Doing this can really help you to feel better.

If you happen to have an urgent medical concern, please call your doctor, go to your local emergency room, or call your local Emergency Contact number. Remember, your doctor is your primary source for information on your condition and treatment. Be sure to speak with them if you have any questions or concerns.

References