

Common Causes of Depression

If you're depressed, it might not be easy to figure out why. In most cases, depression doesn't have a single cause. Instead, it results from a mix of things -- your genes, events in your past, your current circumstances, and other factors.

Here are a few of the things that can play a role in causing depression.

You Don't Have to Live With Depression

- **Biology.** We still don't know exactly what happens in the brain when people become depressed. But studies show that certain parts of the brain don't seem to be working normally. Depression might also be affected by changes in the levels of certain chemicals in the brain, called neurotransmitters.
- **Genetics.** Researchers know that if depression runs in your family, you have a higher chance of becoming depressed.
- **Gender.** Studies show that women are about twice as likely as men to become depressed. No one's sure why. The hormonal changes that women go through at different times of their lives may be a factor.
- **Age.** People who are elderly are at higher risk of depression. That can be compounded by other factors -- living alone and having a lack of social support.
- **Health conditions.** Conditions such as cancer, heart disease, thyroid problems, chronic pain, and many others increase your risk of becoming depressed.
- **Trauma and grief.** Trauma, such as violence or physical or emotional abuse -- whether it's early in life or more recent -- can trigger depression. So can grief after the death of a friend or loved one.
- **Changes and stressful events.** It's not surprising that people might become depressed during stressful times -- such as during a divorce or while caring for a sick relative. Yet even positive changes -- like getting married or starting a new job -- can sometimes trigger depression.
- **Medications and substances.** Many prescription drugs can cause symptoms of depression. Alcohol or substance abuse is common in depressed people. It often makes their condition worse.

Some people have a clear sense of why they become depressed. Others don't. The most important thing to remember is that depression is not your fault. It's not a flaw in your character. It's a disease that can affect anyone -- and regardless of the cause, there are many good ways to treat it.

Source: WebMD.com

http://www.webmd.com/depression/recognizing-depression-symptoms/common-causes?ecd=wnl_dep_073010