

Understanding Dysthymia

You know something is wrong. You feel tired and sad most of the time. In fact, you don't seem to enjoy life much at all anymore. Nothing you do makes you feel better for very long. If this sounds like you, know there is hope. You may have a mood disorder called dysthymia. Talk to your doctor about treatments that can help.

What Is Dysthymia?

Dysthymia is a mild form of depression that may persist for years. More women than men have dysthymia. It's not known just what causes this disorder. It's not as severe as other types of depression, but it does affect well being. You may have trouble with work or school. Your relationships with friends and family may suffer. You may miss much of life's beauty and pleasure. If you have this disorder, you likely:

- Have been depressed most days for at least 2 years.
- Have two or more other symptoms of depression.

Symptoms of Depression

- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling tired all the time
- Feeling restless
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Having trouble thinking clearly or making decisions
- Feeling hopeless



How Is It Treated?

Your doctor may recommend counseling, medications, or both. Just talking to a therapist may be a great relief. Your therapist can help you learn how best to cope with problems. And how to make positive changes in your life. Certain medications may also be an option. These can help you feel less depressed. Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of exercise also may help. So will having the support and caring of those closest to you.

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