

Depression as a Symptom - What your Depression Could be Telling You

Depression itself is a disorder with its own set of symptoms; but depression can also be a symptom in and of itself. There are various health and lifestyle issues of which depression is an indication or "side effect." In other words, the depression may be related to a physical cause in your body, and always needs to be ruled out first. Here are some suggestions and ideas as to what your depression may be telling you.

Cancerous Tumors

A past study using laboratory rats indicated that tumors can have psychological effects as well as physiological ones - and that's not just depression over the knowledge or diagnosis of the cancerous tumor. According to the study, the tumor itself may generate chemicals that induce depression. These chemicals then make their way to the brain where they affect those areas responsible for emotions.

Also, tumors may inhibit the production of corticosterone, which is a stress hormone that decreases the effects of other depression-causing substances.

This study indicates that cancerous tumors can physically trigger depression; thus, depression may be a symptom of the presence of cancer.

Thyroid Problems

Hypothyroidism, or an under-active thyroid, can result in depression. Depression and hypothyroidism also share a number of symptoms, such as:

- * Fatigue
- * Weight gain
- * Menstrual irregularities

Depression is included in the list of symptoms for hypothyroidism. If the main thing you seem to be struggling with is depression, your doctor may prescribe antidepressants and not consider your thyroid. If depression is accompanied by any of the following symptoms, you may want to talk to your doctor about having your thyroid function tested.

- * Dry, flaky skin
- * Hoarseness and/or difficulty speaking
- * Discomfort on swallowing (the thyroid is located on the front of the throat)
- * Thinning hair
- * Inability to tolerate cold, or feeling cold all the time
- * Joint pain

Stress

Too much stress may lead to depression. And because "stress" is such a generalized term, and seems to be common to everyone, many people who feel depressed may not think to look to their lifestyle as the possible culprit. In other words, stress has become the new norm.

Some signs that your depression may be due to stress include:

- * Nightmares and/or sleep disturbances
- * Inability to sleep
- * Irritability
- * Isolation and withdrawal
- * A sense of regret or guilt
- * Feeling overwhelmed

Pregnancy

Even before you know you're pregnant, depression can present itself as the hormonal changes begin to take place in your body. Depression may not be the first sign, but it could be one of the early signs that you are pregnant. This is especially important to note for women who may seek treatment for depression without considering the possibility of pregnancy.

If there's any possibility that you may be pregnant, make sure you tell your doctor when you go in for treatment or help with your depression.