

May Is National Mental Health Month

Good mental health is fundamental to overall health and essential to personal well-being and to the ability to lead a healthy, balanced, and productive life. Mental health problems can impair a person's thinking, feeling, and behavior and can be serious and disabling.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's report on mental health, nearly half of all Americans with a severe mental illness fail to seek treatment. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the problem, fear of stigma, or lack of access to appropriate services. Yet, overall quality of life is greatly improved when a person with a mental health problem gets an early diagnosis and receives appropriate treatment.

Signs of adult depression

Everyone gets down from time to time, but sometimes it's more than just "the blues." Sometimes, it can be clinical depression. Clinical depression affects more than 19 million Americans each year. It is a real illness that can be treated effectively.

Unfortunately, fewer than half of the people who have this illness seek treatment. Too many people believe that it is a "normal" part of life and that they can treat it themselves. Left untreated, depression causes unnecessary suffering and disruption in one's life and work, and costs about \$44 billion a year in lost workdays, decreased productivity and other losses.

Adult depression quiz

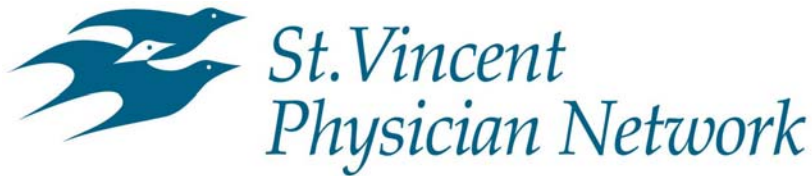
The signs and symptoms of clinical depression are:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
- Loss of pleasure and interest in once-enjoyable activities, including sex
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as chronic pain or digestive disorders
- Difficulty concentrating at work or school; or difficulty remembering things or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Thoughts of suicide or death

If you experience five or more of these symptoms for two weeks or longer, you could have clinical depression. See a [doctor](#) or qualified mental health professional for help, right away. To find a physician close to you, please call 356-CARE.

Signs of depression in children

Parents and family members are usually the first to notice if a child has problems with emotions or behavior. Your observations, along with those of teachers and other caregivers, can help determine whether you need to seek help for your child.



The following signs may indicate the need for professional help:

- Decline in school performance
- Poor grades despite strong efforts
- Constant worry or anxiety
- Repeated refusal to go to school or to take part in normal activities
- Hyperactivity or fidgeting
- Persistent nightmares
- Persistent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Depression, sadness or irritability

Early identification, diagnosis and treatment can help children reach their full potential. If you suspect a problem or have questions, talk with your child's pediatrician or contact a mental health professional.

--St. Vincent Physician Network offers 23 convenient locations throughout central Indiana. To find a St. Vincent Physician Network office near you, call 317.356.CARE or visit us online at physiciannetwork.stvincent.org.