



## Depression... NOT a normal part of aging

### **How are you feeling?**

Dealing with loss, change, loneliness or a chronic medical condition can be overwhelming.

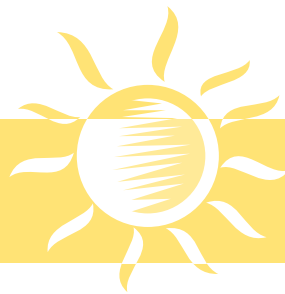
- Have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?
- Do you have little interest or pleasure in doing things you used to enjoy?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, and have been feeling sad for more than two weeks, you may be suffering from a real medical condition. Talk to your doctor today.

People may not seek help for depression because they think it comes with age or believe that they can pull themselves out of it. Depression is a medical condition like diabetes or heart disease that is easily treated with medications and/or talking therapy. At least 80 percent of people can be treated effectively and their symptoms relieved within a few weeks.



## Health and wellness tips



**Check your medications.** Medications for blood pressure, sleep, nervousness and others can affect your mood. Tell your doctor about all of the medications you are taking including over-the-counter, vitamins and herbal supplements to avoid side effects.

**Limit alcohol consumption.** Alcohol can cause depression. When alcohol and drugs are mixed, interactions can occur and low moods may be aggravated.

**Stay connected.** Talk to a friend, family member, get a pet or find a new hobby. Participate in activities you enjoy, such as a movie, ballgame or a class. Make new friends.

**Be active.** Regular physical activity can improve mood and physical health. Walk, garden or exercise (even in your chair). Aim for 30 minutes most days. If you haven't exercised much, check with your doctor before you begin.

**Eat healthy and drink plenty of fluids.** Select healthy snacks to boost your nutrition, such as string cheese, fruits, vegetables, yogurt or nuts. Make eating a social activity. Invite a friend or family member to dinner. Have you recently lost weight and your appetite for food? Talk to your doctor.



## Before you say, “I’m fine”....

### **Ask yourself if you feel:**

- nervous or “empty”
- guilty or worthless
- less interested in the things you used to enjoy
- restless or irritable
- no one loves you
- life is not worth living

### **Or if you are:**

- sleeping more or less than usual
- eating more or less than usual
- having persistent headaches, stomach aches, or chronic pain


These may be symptoms of a real medical condition that can be treated.

Depression is not a normal part of aging.

Talk to your doctor today.



## Black & Sunny Clouds & Days



## Where to find help for depression

The most common resource is your family doctor.

Use the checklist attached to explain your symptoms. If your needs are not adequately addressed, seek a second opinion. It may be helpful to bring a friend or relative to the appointment with you. Your doctor may recommend a checkup and initiate treatment, or refer you to a mental health specialist, as needed.



To learn about services and local programs for depression, or to find resources about Alzheimer's, stroke and more call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 or log on to [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)



If someone you know is in crisis or an emergency, call the National Hopeline at 1-800-784-2433.

### *Are you caring for a family member?*

Caregiving can cause lifestyle changes and a reversal of family roles. It can be personally satisfying yet stressful. The stress of caregiving can trigger depression. Persons with Alzheimer's disease may also benefit from treatment for depression. See your family doctor. Education or support groups may be helpful for coping with illness, caregiving, grief or loss. Call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 to find resources on Alzheimer's, arthritis, Parkinson's disease and more.



**In partnership with:**

**U of M Center on Aging/MAGEC**

**Elder Network**

**Minnesota Department of Health**

**Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-Dakotas Chapter**

**Arthritis Foundation  
North Central Chapter**

**National Stroke Association-  
Minnesota Chapter**

**Struthers Parkinson's Center**

*These materials were and funded in part from AoA grant #90AZ2361 Title IIIIE Caregiver Funds through the Administration on Aging*



# Black & Sunny Clouds & Days

**FEELING DEPRESSED?  
THERE IS HOPE.**