



**Dr. Dattatraya Dhavale**  
**M.D. (Psych. Med.), D.P.M.**  
**Phone No : (020) 25535074**  
**Email ID : [dattatrayad@yahoo.com](mailto:dattatrayad@yahoo.com)**

## **Depression**

Depression is a serious medical illness. It is more than just feeling unhappy, sad, or hurt. It is a very common disease and person of any age may develop depression symptoms at any stage of his/her life.

### **Symptoms of Depression:**

People with depressive illnesses may not experience all the symptoms. The severity, frequency, and duration of symptoms will vary depending on the individual and his or her particular illness. It consists of a characteristic set of physical and/ or psychological symptoms.

#### **Physical symptoms:**

- Headache, sensation of heaviness in the head
- Giddiness, loss of balance sensation
- Palpitation
- Fatigue
- Weight loss

#### **Psychological symptoms:**

- Depressed Mood
- Diminished interest or pleasure
- Sleep problem
- Loss of concentration
- Thoughts about ending life.

The symptoms are present for longer than 2 weeks.

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### **Causes of Depression:**

There is no single known cause of depression. Rather it likely results from a combination of factors or symptoms.

Different factors contribute towards onset of this disorder.

Mainly, there could be a genetic predisposition with some near or distant relatives having suffered from similar disorder.

Individuals with excessive emotional or unstable temperaments are likely to suffer from depression.

Recent stressful life events and childbirth are frequent precipitating factors.

### **Treatment for Depression:**

Depression is a treatable disorder. The first step to getting an appropriate treatment is to visit a concerned doctor.

Depression needs to be evaluated by a professional e.g. a psychiatrist or psychologist.

Mild Depression may respond to psychological therapy alone. In majority, treatment consists of anti-depressant medicines combined with other therapies.

Initial duration of treatment is 3-6 months.

In the absence of treatment, Depression may significantly affect career, work, and family life. The risk of suicide is real.

### **Diagnosis of Depression**

A person is advised to see a professional if –

- 1) He/she is continuously depressed for 2 weeks or longer (whatever be the cause).
- 2) The condition is causing impairment in his/her studies, job, marital life, or social relations.

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