

Patient information from BMJ

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Depression in children and teenagers: questions to ask your doctor

If you've been told that your child has depression, you may want to talk to your doctor to find out more. And teenagers with depression may have questions of their own.

If you're a parent, here are some questions you might want to ask.

- How can I tell if my child is depressed?
- How can I get them to visit the doctor?
- Does my child need treatment? If so, what kind of treatment does he or she need?
- What kinds of talking treatments (psychotherapy) are there?
- When will my child start to feel better?
- If a talking treatment doesn't help, could an antidepressant medication work?
- How long will my child need to have this treatment?
- What will happen if my child doesn't have this treatment?
- Does the treatment have any side effects or risks?
- Are there any signs of side effects I should watch out for?
- How can my child stop getting depressed again?
- What should I do if I think my child's getting depressed again?
- Is my child likely to become suicidal? Are there any warning signs I should look out for?

If you're a teenager, here are some questions you might want to ask.

- How can I tell if I'm depressed?
- Do I need treatment?
- What treatment do I need?
- What kinds of talking treatments (psychotherapy) are there?
- When will I start to feel better?

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- If a talking treatment doesn't help, can I take an antidepressant?
- How long will I need treatment?
- Does the treatment have any side effects or risks?
- What should I do if I think I'm getting side effects?
- How can I stop getting depressed again?
- What should I do if I think I'm getting depressed again?
- What should I do if I have thoughts about harming myself or about suicide?

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