Managing Your Depression
By Taking Antidepressants

Follow these tips to help make your treatment plan work for you.

Depression is not a normal part of aging and you don’t have to manage it on your own. There are effective treatment options for depression. Common treatments are antidepressant medicine, talk therapy/counseling, or a combination of both.

To feel your best, it’s important to follow your doctor’s instructions for taking your medicine. It’s easy to forget to take your medicine. Here are three tips that can help:

1. **Take your medicine at the same time every day**
   - Use a pill box so you can see if you’ve taken your medicine
   - Mark a calendar each time you take your medicine
   - Use a mobile app to set up text and email reminders

2. **Remember to refill before your medicine runs out**
   - Ask your pharmacy to send refill reminders
   - Use a calendar. Make a note to remind yourself to refill your medicine at least 4 days before running out.
   - **Remember**, you can use Provide-A-Ride transportation service for trips to the pharmacy

3. **Give your antidepressants time to work**
   - Keep taking your medicine, even if you don’t notice a change right away
   - It may take six to eight weeks to feel the full benefits
   - If the antidepressant doesn’t seem to be working, your doctor might change the dosage or try a different drug
   - **Important**: Don’t stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor. Stopping suddenly could cause side effects or worsen symptoms.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health
What else do I need to know?

How long will I need to keep taking an antidepressant?

• Most people experiencing depression take an antidepressant for six to 12 months — sometimes longer
• If you are taking an antidepressant for depression, keep taking your medicine even when you start to feel better. Stopping it too early increases the chance that your symptoms will return.
• Your doctor will let you know when to stop taking your medicine

What about side effects?

• Antidepressants can cause side effects like headaches, upset stomach, fatigue or restlessness
• Many of the side effects tend to be mild. They usually improve within a few weeks.
• If side effects bother you too much, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about them. Your doctor might try a different medicine.
• **Remember**: Do not stop taking your antidepressant before talking to your doctor

What about other treatments for depression?

• Counseling or “talk” therapy is another common treatment for depression. Often, a combination of counseling and medicine is most effective.
• Many find support groups and social support from family, friends and spiritual or religious advisors helpful
• Some also use holistic remedies. Talk with your doctor about any remedies you are using, so they can be included in your treatment plan. Check with your Care Coordinator to see if this kind of treatment is covered by your plan.

Are there places in my community that can help?

• The National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI MN) offers help, including support groups, for people with depression and their families. Visit [namihelps.org](http://namihelps.org) for more information. You can also call (651) 645-2048 or toll free 1-888-626-4435 or email namihelps@namimn.org. TTY: 711.

Whom can I go to with questions?

• Bring your questions to your pharmacist or doctor
• You can also call your Care Coordinator for help with transportation, finding a mental health provider or when you just need some support.

Did You Know

Some form of mental illness affects as many as one in four Americans according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health
Medica Choice Care™ (MA) and Medica MinnesotaCare members
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