

YOUR CARE POLMED

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Am I depressed?



Whilst 1 in 6 South Africans struggle with mental health issues or substance abuse, many are unaware that they're living with depression.



What causes depression?

Common risk factors include:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic. A recent survey by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group found that 40% of people had experienced depression during lockdown.
2. Financial concerns
3. Medication
4. Drug use
5. Family history
6. Chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension



Symptoms of depression

Symptoms of depression present themselves differently among individuals, and the stigma associated with mental illness can also mean symptoms are ignored. It's important to be able to identify the early signs of depression.

According to psychiatrist Dr Ryan Fuller, if you, or someone you know, have been exhibiting some of the symptoms below for at least two weeks, for most days during this time, you may be suffering from depression:

- A sudden change in mood, with feelings of hopelessness and despair
- Low mood
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Irritability
- A significant increase or decrease in appetite and weight
- Suicidal thoughts
- Sleep disturbances



Could I be depressed?

Over the past two weeks, how often have you experienced the following symptoms?

| | Not at all | Several days | More than half the days | Nearly every day |
|---|------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Unable to stop or control worrying | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Feeling down, depressed or hopeless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Little interest or pleasure in doing things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | | | | |

Calculate your score by totalling the columns. Scoring 0-2 is rated normal, 3-5 is mild, whereas 6-8 is moderate and 9-12 is severe.

Scoring 3 for the last two questions suggests depression. **If you scored 'moderate' to 'severe', you should reach out to a mental health professional or your doctor for support.** Early management is key to ensuring that you stay positive and motivated.

Polmed has a mental health programme. For more information, contact the Polmed Disease Risk Management programme on 0860 765 633 and follow the prompts to the **Mental Health Programme**. Alternatively, send an email to Polpsych@medscheme.co.za

References:

- <https://www.sacap.edu.za/blog/management-leadership/mental-health-south-africa/>
- http://www.sadag.org/images/mhm/Locked-down-today-cognitively-dissonant-about_tomorrow.pdf
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression#causes>
- <https://www.oregonpainguidance.org/app/content/uploads/2016/05/PHQ-4.pdf>

If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za with your membership number and contact details.