

Q. How can I tell if I'm depressed?

A. Pay attention to how you feel. That's the starting point to give your mood and mental health a checkup.

Sometimes Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps wanted to quit or skip practice. Winning 28 medals didn't make him feel like a success. That's when he had to take a hard look at what was going on inside his head.

"It's OK to not be OK," says Phelps. "And for me, the most important thing was just opening up and talking about [depression], asking for help."

Everybody has good days and bad days. A day or two of feeling down doesn't mean you're depressed. But if you feel down for more than two weeks, you might be suffering from depression.¹

Depression by the numbers

- An estimated 29% of all adults in the United States will be diagnosed with depression at some point.²
- Approximately 280 million people worldwide are living with depression.³
- Depression is 50% more common among women than men.

Factors that contribute to depression

Millions of people struggle with depression, but the cause is often linked to more than one thing, like:



- Genetics
- Personal problems
- Social isolation
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness

For some people, mild depression might be a rare setback that lasts a few weeks. For others, depression can be a long-term problem.

So how can you tell if you're depressed?

You probably know something isn't right. If you don't feel like yourself, take a minute to check up on your mental health and mood.

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Feelings of anxiety, sadness, or hopelessness
- Poor sleep or insomnia
- Change in appetite (eating more or eating less)
- Change in weight
- Low energy or fatigue
- Increase in irritability or anger
- Loss of interest in activities you enjoy
- Self-medicating with food, substance abuse or other addictive habits

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- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Body aches, headaches, muscle cramps, or digestive problems
- Thoughts of death or suicide

If you've had one or more of these symptoms for more than two weeks, you should follow Phelps' example.

- Talk to your doctor or counselor to see if you are depressed.^{4,5}
- Counseling, medication, regular exercise, and other healthy lifestyle habits can help treat and prevent depression.
- If you're in a funk or feeling depressed, reach out and ask for help.

References

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