

## Adolescent Depression

Depression is a type of mood disorder that influences the way one feels. A low mood and feelings of depression may be thought of as adult problems, but children and teens have similar rates of depression and stress. From an adult's perspective, the problems that adolescents face may seem insignificant, yet they may feel massive and impossible to overcome in adolescence, which may also lead to depression.

### Occurrence and Prevalence

Although depression can affect anyone, it often starts between the ages of 15 and 30. 6.5% of Canadian youth experience major depression yearly. Depression is also associated with suicidal behaviour, one of the most common causes of non-accidental deaths in young people.

### Symptoms

Adolescents with depression may experience the following symptoms:

#### **Emotional Changes**

Feelings of unhappiness, guilt, worry, anger, loneliness, helplessness, rejection, etc.

#### **Physical Changes**

Occurrence of unexplainable aches, feeling tired all the time, problems with eating or sleeping, and unexpected weight gain or loss.

#### **Thought Changes**

Indicating low self-esteem, self-dislike, or self-blame; talking about oneself negatively.

#### **Behaviour Changes**

Withdrawal from others, crying easily, lack of interest in activities previously enjoyed, and sudden outbursts of anger over small occurrences.

### Treatments that Work

#### **Psychotherapy**

This most often starts with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to teach skills to reinforce healthy thinking, problem-solving, and managing stress but may include many interpersonal therapy approaches.

#### **Medication**

Physician assessment and referral may indicate a benefit for age-appropriate anti-depressants.

#### **Self-help**

Maintaining healthy eating, sleeping, and exercising habits is particularly important in adolescence.

**Resources** – [For Youth: Dealing with Depression](#), CMHA BC

**References** –Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario: [Children, Youth and Depression](#)

Statistics Canada: [Depression and suicidal ideation among Canadians aged 15 to 24](#)