

# Preventing depression during your teens and twenties



Adolescence and young adulthood present many new opportunities. But this time of change can also be stressful and cause depression. If you're feeling overwhelmed, read on...

## What you should know

- Depression can happen to anyone and is not a sign of weakness.
- It's an illness characterized by persistent sadness or irritability and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by difficulty in carrying out daily activities.
- Other signs include withdrawal from others, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fatigue, restlessness and difficulties with schoolwork. You might also be experiencing changes in appetite or sleep patterns.
- You might be inclined to take more risks than normal and sometimes think about harming yourself.
- There are lots of things that you can do to prevent and treat depression.

## What you can do if you are feeling down, or think you may be depressed

- Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling.
- Seek professional help – your local health-care worker or doctor is a good place to start.
- Stay connected with friends and family.
- Exercise regularly – even if it's just a short walk.
- Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits.
- Avoid or restrict alcohol intake and refrain from using illicit drugs – they can make depression worse.
- Try to keep doing things that you've always enjoyed – even when you don't feel like it.
- Be kind to yourself and try to focus on the positive.
- Congratulate yourself on your achievements – past and present, no matter how small.

**REMEMBER:** You are not alone.  
If you think you might have depression,  
talk to someone you trust or seek professional help.

