

DEPRESSION IN TEENS

Being a teenager brings changes to your body and brain that can affect how you feel, think and behave. Pressure in school, difficulties with friends or negative comments on social media are examples of stressful situations that happen often to a typical teen. These examples and many others can cause normal emotional ups and downs. So how do you know if you are depressed??

Sadness vs. Depression

Times of sadness are normal. If you go through a breakup, fail a test or find out a friend is moving away, then it would be normal to feel sad. Most of the time, people can move past this feeling with a little time and support. But if you have been extremely sad for more than a few weeks, feel like you can't concentrate or don't want to do things you normally enjoy, then you may need to be evaluated for depression.

What is Depression?

Depression is a medical illness that interferes with your normal daily activities. It is common but can be very serious. It involves a strong mood that includes sadness, discouragement, or hopelessness. It interferes with thinking and the ability to enjoy things you normally would. Depression also drains energy and motivation that you need for normal activities.

Do young people often suffer from Depression?

Depression can happen at any age, but the symptoms often begin in the teens or early 20s. About 8% of teens suffer depression lasting a year compared to 5% of the general population. 70% of teens diagnosed with depression will have more than one episode before they reach adulthood.

What do I do if I have symptoms of depression?

Most people with depression need treatment to get better. If you are a teen having these symptoms, talk to a trusted adult like a parent, counselor or coach. The next step would be to see a doctor for evaluation.

How is depression treated?

Depression should be diagnosed using standardized screening tools. Once a diagnosis is made, depression is usually treated with therapy, medication or a combination of the two. Mental Health professionals licensed in psychotherapy help patients identify and manage their troubling thoughts and behaviors. Some people require anti-depressant medication prescribed by a physician to manage their symptoms. Anyone on medication should follow the physician's instructions closely and report any side effects right away. It is also important to stay active and exercise, keep a regular sleep schedule, and to seek support from family and friends.

How can Raleigh Pediatrics help?

We have a Registered Nurse in each office working as a Behavioral Health Coordinator. You can leave her a message and she will return your call within a couple days. During this call, she will discuss the symptoms and have you complete appropriate diagnostic screening tools. Once these screenings are complete, the Behavioral Health Coordinator will arrange for a consult appointment with one of our pediatricians or an outside referral depending on your situation. The information and screening tools will be forwarded to the physician, so that they can review the information prior to your appointment. Our physicians are equipped to treat all medical conditions including anxiety and depression. Our practice also partners with psychologists and psychiatrists in the community when needed to achieve the best outcome for our patients.

****If you or someone you know is considering suicide or self-harm, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)****