

Fact sheet

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Depression and Chronic Kidney Disease

What is depression?

Everyone feels sad, grumpy or flat from time to time. However, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time (weeks, months or years) and sometimes without any clear reason. Depression is more than just feeling sad – it's a serious illness.

If you have depression, you may:

- have stopped going out
- be withdrawing from close family and friends
- be relying on alcohol and/or sedatives
- no longer enjoy regular activities
- have trouble making decisions
- always feel tired and lack energy



Depression and chronic kidney disease (CKD)

Depression is common in people with CKD as well as their family and caregivers. There are many reasons why some may suffer from depression:

- You may be shocked by your diagnosis
- You may feel like you have little or no control over your physical health
- You may feel that you are losing time in your day due to medical appointments and time for treatments
- You may be anxious about the change in lifestyle and limitations on your day-to-day activities

If you think you are depressed it is important to talk to someone, as there are many treatments available.

Could I have depression?

If you are worried that you have depression ask yourself:

- Do I struggle to get out of bed and do daily activities regularly?
- Do I feel as if I am surrounded by a black cloud?
- Do I cry regularly?
- Do I get angry easily for no reason?
- Do I feel there is no hope for the future?
- Have I lost interest or pleasure in doing things?
- Do I consider harming myself?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you may have depression.

Speak to your doctor or health professional who can assess you properly and find out what treatment is best for you.

Depression can be treated

Depression can be effectively treated in patients with CKD. Treatments that can help include:

- Antidepressant medications, psychotherapies (talking to a professional) or a combination of both
- Psychological treatments can help manage your mood, change negative patterns of thinking, and improve your coping skills.

Your healthcare team will work with you to find the treatment that works best for you.



Where can I get help?

Your doctor is the best place to start for professional help. Your doctor can:

- diagnose if you have depression
- check for any other health problems or medication that may be contributing to your symptoms
- discuss possible treatments
- provide brief counselling
- refer you to a mental health specialist, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.



Where to go for immediate help?

If you are feeling overwhelmed and wondering how you can keep on going there are some help lines where you can speak to someone **24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

- For immediate help, call the Beyond Blue support line on **1300 224 636**. You can also visit www.beyondblue.org.au to find information, chat online with a trained health professional or email your questions.
- For crisis support, call Lifeline on **13 11 14**, or visit www.lifeline.org.au

What does that word mean? More information

Antidepressant - Medications that are prescribed by doctors that are used to treat depression.

Psychiatrist - A medically trained doctor who specialises in the study and treatment of mental health.

Psychologist - A health professional who is an expert in human behaviour. Many psychologists work directly with those experiencing difficulties, such as mental health disorders including anxiety and depression. A psychologist cannot prescribe medication.

Sedative - A substance or drug used for its relaxation, calming or sleep inducing affect.

Kidney Health Australia has collaborated with SANE Australia to produce 'The SANE Guide to Good Mental Health for People Affected by Kidney Disease'. This booklet looks at associated mental health problems, treatment options and includes case studies of people who have experienced chronic kidney disease and its impact on their lives. Copies are available to purchase from Kidney Health Australia.

The SANE Guide to Good Mental Health
for people affected by kidney disease



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Depression is more than just feeling sad – it is a serious illness.
- Depression is common in people with CKD as well as their family and caregivers.
- If you are feeling depressed, it is important to talk to someone, as there are many treatments available.
- Depression can be effectively treated in patients with CKD. Treatments can include medications as well as psychological therapies.

For more information about kidney or urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Health Information Service (KHIS) on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website kidney.org.au to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or health professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.

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If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, contact the National Relay Service on **1800 555 677** or **relayservice.com.au**

For all types of services ask for 1800 454 363