



# Depression after SCI

Depression is a serious medical illness that involves the brain. It's more than just a feeling of being "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. If you are one of the more than 20 million people in the United States who have depression, the feelings do not go away. They persist and interfere with your everyday life. Symptoms can include:

- Sadness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Change in weight
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Energy loss
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Depression can run in families, and usually starts between the ages of 15 and 30. It is much more common in women.

There are effective treatments for depression, including antidepressants and talk therapy. Most people do best by using both.

Source: MedlinePlus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/depression.html>

## Resources related to SCI and Depression

**Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation: Women's Mental Health After Paralysis**  
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/reeve-assets-production/Womens-Mental-Health-After-Paralysis-Booklet-Final-Master-4-8-2020.pdf>

A free 44-page booklet on various topics related to women's mental health after SCI and paralysis, it includes a section on depression. Please call 1-800-539-7309 for a free print copy.

**Spinal Cord Injury Information Network: Depression**  
<http://www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/daily-living/managing-personal-health/secondary-medical-conditions/depression>

This page has links to resources related to depression among people with spinal cord injury.

### **Spinal Cord Injury Information Network: Adjustment to Spinal Cord Injury**

<http://www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/daily-living/adjustment>

This page discusses problems individuals and family members often have in adjusting to spinal cord injury and has advice for healthy adjustment.

### **Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System: Depression and Spinal Cord Injury**

[http://sci.washington.edu/info/pamphlets/depression\\_sci.asp](http://sci.washington.edu/info/pamphlets/depression_sci.asp)

This pamphlet, which can be downloaded as a PDF, addresses symptoms of depression, treatment with antidepressants and/or counseling. It also has a self-test.

### **Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System: “Landmark Study of Depression in SCI”**

[http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/07\\_win\\_depression.asp](http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/07_win_depression.asp)

This article from the Winter 2007 edition of *Spinal Cord Injury Update* announces a 5-year research study examining the treatment of depression in people with SCI.

### **Paralyzed Veterans of America**

[www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org) has a clinical practice guideline for health care workers titled **Management of Mental Health Disorders, Substance Use Disorders, and Suicide in Adults with Spinal Cord Injury**.

### **University of Washington: How to Cope with Depression Fact Sheet**

<http://agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets/depression>

## **General Resources on Depression**

### **American Psychological Association: Depression**

<http://www.apa.org/topics/depress/index.aspx>

This page has news, articles, and resources to help people get help for depression, including a psychologist locator service.

### **American Association on Health and Disability: “Depressive Symptoms and Clinical Depression and People with Disabilities - Prevalence”**

<http://www.aahd.us/2008/03/depressive-symptoms-and-clinical-depression-and-people-with-disabilities-prevalence/>

This briefing summary provides an overview of some of the issues involved with depressive symptoms and clinical depression in youth, adults, and elderly people with disabilities

### **American Association on Health and Disability: “Depressive Symptoms and Clinical Depression and People with Disabilities - Treatment”**

<http://www.aahd.us/2008/03/depressive-symptoms-and-clinical-depression-and-people-with-disabilities-treatment/>

This briefing summary provides an overview of some of the treatments being used for depressive symptoms and clinical depression in youth, adults, and elderly people with disabilities.

### **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)**

[www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org)

55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490

Chicago, IL 60604

\1-800-826-3632 (toll-free)

DBSA offers a support group locator.

### **International Foundation for Research and Education on Depression (iFred)**

<http://www.ifred.org>

P.O. Box 17598

Baltimore, MD 21297-1598

E-mail: [info@ifred.org](mailto:info@ifred.org)

iFred aims to shed a positive light on depression throughout the world in order to prevent onset, research causes and treatments, and eradicate stigma.

### **MSKTC: Depression and Spinal Cord Injury**

<http://www.msktc.org/sci/factsheets/depression-and-spinal-cord-injury>

MSKTC is a national center that works to put research into practice to serve the needs of people with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, and burn injuries.

### **MSKTC: Systematic Review: SCI & Measures of Depression**

<http://www.msktc.org/sci/research/systematic-reviews/Measures-Of-Major-Depression>

### **National Institute on Aging: Depression and Older Adults**

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/depression-and-older-adults>

### **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): NIMH Pages About Depression**

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/topics/topic-page-depression.shtml>

This page has links to NIMH's resources on depression, including information on symptoms, treatment, and research. There are also links to publications about depression, scientific news, and blog posts.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1-800-273-8255 (toll-free/24 hours a day)

1-800-799-4889 (TTY/toll-free)

## **Internet Forums**

### **NeuroTalk Support Groups**

<https://www.neurotalk.org/depression/>

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