

# MALE DEPRESSION



Boys learn from a very early age to suppress their feelings and are told to “just grin and bear it.” Boys are conditioned to be in control, to be independent, strong, and rational. The male code of behavior can be rigid and emotionally constrictive. Parents, teachers, peers, and the media all reinforce the image of male emotional strength and detachment.

Depression has always been seen as a women’s issue. Yet, considering that men are four times more likely to commit suicide, are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to act out violently, it’s apparent that men often suffer from depression.

Symptoms of depression include a depressed or irritable mood, constant fatigue, lack of interest in otherwise enjoyable activities, change in appetite and/or weight, sleep disturbances, frequent feelings of worthlessness or guilt, agitation, difficulty concentrating, and frequent thoughts of death or suicide. You do not need to have all these symptoms to have depression.

Men sometimes express their depression with excessive aggression and reckless, dangerous behavior, i.e., road rage or physical abuse; work or gamble compulsively; abuse or become dependent on drugs and alcohol, and have extra-marital affairs.

Depression also affects one’s physical health. Depression increases the risk for heart disease and is often found among men after they have had a heart attack.

- ***Be a man.***
- ***Don’t be a wimp. You can take it.***
- ***Keep your problems to yourself. Nobody wants to hear them.***

A study of patients with heart failure revealed that depressive symptoms could be the strongest independent predictor of short-term decline in health status for both men and women.

Problems with sexual performance occur along with depression, possibly as a result of common risk factors such as age, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and a sedentary lifestyle. Depression alone can also be the cause of sexual problems. Conversely, treatment for the physical causes of sexual dysfunction can improve an underlying depression.

Poor quality sleep can result in psychological and physical manifestations that look like depression. Restoring a more healthy sleep pattern can help rule out a diagnosis of depression.

Depression is a treatable condition. If you think you may be depressed, contact your Primary Care Physician or your Employee Assistance Program for help. (Suicidal intentions and gestures need to be addressed immediately by calling 911 or going to the nearest hospital emergency room.)

From: [www.webMD.com](http://www.webMD.com) 199  
[www.nursingspectrum.com](http://www.nursingspectrum.com) 2004

## How to contact your EAP – Employee Assistance Program

Phone numbers:

(888) 682-2224, extension 624 or 401

(978) 922-3000, extension 3439

November 2004 *published by your Employee Assistance Provider 888-682-2224, ext. 624*

Email: [LKenny@hes-inc.org](mailto:LKenny@hes-inc.org)