

Antidepressant medications

What you should know before deciding on treatment for depression

Quick facts about antidepressant medications

- They work by helping to balance chemicals in the brain.
- They are not addictive or habit forming. They are not uppers. They are not tranquilizers.
- Most people respond well to medication.

Treating depression with medication

Many types of antidepressants are available. Your doctor will help choose the one that is right for you.

- You may be started at low doses to give your body time to adapt.
- Your doctor will then increase the dose until you begin to feel better.
- After taking medication for three to six weeks, most people begin to feel more like their usual self.

It may take time for you and your doctor to find what works best for you. You may even have to try more than one medication. That's okay.

Most important is that you should take the medication exactly as your doctor prescribes — even if you feel better!

For the first six to eight weeks after you begin treatment, your doctor will want to see you often to check:

- How much medication you take
- How often you take it
- Side effects or reactions you may have
- How well the medication is working

After your depression goes away, you will keep taking the medication for four to nine months more. This will help keep your depression from returning.

You may need to stay on the medication longer if you have had two or more previous episodes of depression.

What can you do to help your treatment?

- Go to all of your doctor appointments.
- Talk to your doctor about any questions or concerns you have.
- Take the medication exactly as your doctor says to.
- Tell your doctor right away if you have any side effects (a bad reaction).
- Tell your doctor how the medication is working (for example, whether you are feeling better or worse).

Adapted from Rost K. Depression Tool Kit for Primary Care NIMH grant MH54444.

Health benefits and health insurance plans are offered, underwritten and/or administered by Aetna Health Inc., Aetna Health of California Inc., Aetna Health Insurance Company of New York, Aetna Health Insurance Company, Aetna Behavioral Health, LLC and/or Aetna Life Insurance Company (Aetna). In Maryland, by Aetna Health Inc., 151 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06156. Each insurer has sole financial responsibility for its own products.

This material is for information only and is not an offer or invitation to contract. Health benefits and health insurance plans contain exclusions and limitations. Aetna does not provide care or guarantee access to health services. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change. For more information about Aetna plans, refer to www.aetna.com.

Policy forms issued in Oklahoma include: HMO OK COC-5 09/07, HMO/OK GA-3 11/01, GR-23 and/or GR-29.