

Treatment for depression

What treatments are best for depression?

Treatments for depression include therapy and medication. Medication and therapy together work better than either one alone.

How long does treatment last?

Every patient is different, but once symptoms start to improve, treatment usually lasts several months.

What medications are used to treat depression in teens?

Most teens with depression take medications called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs). SSRIs work by increasing a chemical called serotonin in the brain. Common SSRIs include fluoxetine (Prozac), sertraline (Zoloft), and escitalopram (Lexapro). SSRIs are also used for treating anxiety.

How quickly do SSRIs work?

It can take up to 4 to 6 weeks of taking an SSRI regularly to decrease the symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Are there side effects with SSRIs?

It is common to have side effects from SSRIs in the first 1-2 weeks after beginning treatment.

The most common side effects include:

- nausea, stomachaches, or diarrhea
- headaches
- agitation
- sleep disturbance
- irritability
- sexual side effects

What happens if I stop taking SSRIs?

Stopping SSRIs suddenly may cause unpleasant symptoms. Talk with your doctor before stopping an SSRI.

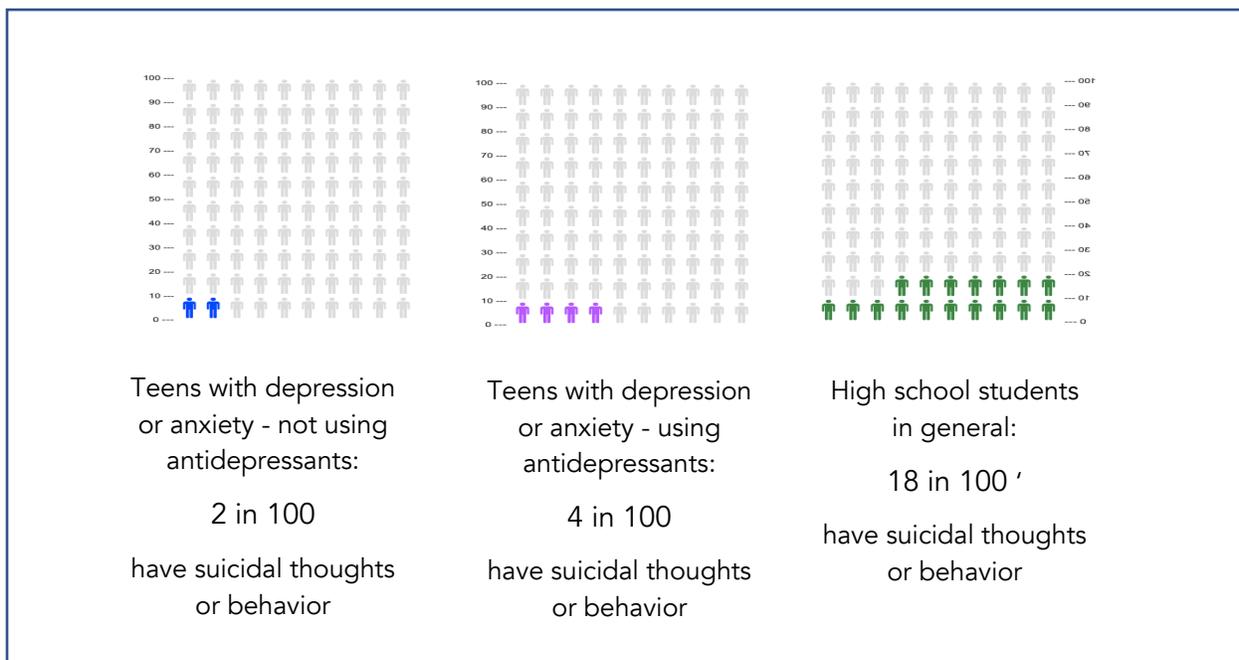
Depression and suicide risk in teens

How common are thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts among teens?

Among students in grades 9–12 in the United States in 2015, 18 in 100 reported that they had seriously thought about suicide in the last 12 months.

Do antidepressants increase suicide risk?

In 2004 the US Food and Drug Administration reviewed medical studies of antidepressant medications in more than 2000 children and teens. 4 in 100 of teens taking antidepressant medication had suicidal thoughts or behavior compared to 2 in 100 who were not taking medication. There were no deaths from suicide.



Balancing treatment and side effects

- Children and teens with depression are at increased risk of suicide attempts and suicide.
- Antidepressant medications improve symptoms of depression.
- Treating depression is the best way to reduce suicidal thoughts and behavior.

In the first few weeks after starting medication, or after changing the dose, it is important to watch closely for symptoms of depression and for medication side effects, including suicidal thoughts and behavior.