

Major Depressive Disorder Websites
Reviewed by Felisha Lotspeich

Major depression. (2010).

<https://health.google.com/health/ref/Major+depression>

This Website gives basic information about major depressive disorder, but it refers to the disorder as *Major Depression*. The topics about depression that the website covers are: overview, symptoms, treatment, causes, tests and diagnosis, prognosis, prevention, complications, and when to contract a doctor. The site does mention that a person must have “five or more symptoms of depression for at least 2 weeks”, and the author mentions that these symptoms include: feeling sad, hopeless, worthless, or pessimistic. Therefore, the website does not provide a comprehensive list in that paragraph of possible symptoms of depression. However, in the next section, there is a list of symptoms, and it includes other important ones such as agitation, fatigue, and recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation.

In addition to explaining medication and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in the treatment section of the website, the site explains a new type of therapy called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), which alters brain function in a way similar to ECT but with fewer side effects. The authors explain that the cause of depression is unknown but that it may be genetic or because of chemical imbalances in the brain. They list ways to prevent depression, but they also explain that some episodes of depression are not preventable.

On the side of the website, there are links to articles about depression along with search trends of others who have searched the site. The trends include a list of common symptoms of depression and drugs that are often prescribed to people with depression.

This website is short in content, but it still provides a significant amount of information for anyone looking on the internet who wants to learn more about depression. The information is

concise, and depression is written about as if it were like any other illness with symptoms, treatment, and prognosis. The authors are realistic about the illness, saying that some episodes of depression may not be preventable, but they are also quick to say that the outcome of depression is usually good with treatment.

Welcome to depression.com. (1997-2010).

<http://www.depression.com/>

This website was written by GlaxoSmithKline, a pharmaceutical company that is known for researching and developing medications for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The links across the top of this website are the following: *Understanding depression*, *Treating depression*, *Day by day*, *Web resources*, and *Feedback*. Within the *Understanding depression* link, there is basic information about depression along with information about depression-related mood disorders. The author also writes about how depression affects men, women, and older adults differently. Also within this section, as in the other sections of the website, there is a *Look, Listen & Learn* link that contains videos of people who have been depressed explaining their experiences with depression. Within the *Treating depression* website, there is information about antidepressant medications and other therapies such as psychotherapy. Also, there is a form for people to print out to take with them to their doctor's appointment so that they do not forget to ask questions about their medications. The *Day by day* link contains information for people on how to help themselves as they recover from depression such as recognizing early signs and keeping a journal. Another important aspect of this part of the website are the links that give step-by-step instructions on stress management techniques such as visualization and stretching exercises. The *Web resources* link contains a list of resources for people with depression, and each item in the list has a link attached to it so people can go to the other websites. The

Feedback link is designed so that the company who wrote the website can see who is reading the website. There is a short survey in this part of the website so that people can tell the authors if they are reading this website for themselves or for someone they know who has depression.

This website is one of the best designed websites on the subject of depression on the internet. It is aesthetically pleasing and well-organized, and it contains a lot of information. It also has features that many other websites do not such as videos of people with depression who share their experiences and stress management guides. The website starts out with a statement about how depression is not something that you can just “snap out of”. Instead, the author explains that depression is a serious medical condition requiring treatment. At the same time, however, the website is written in such a way as to encourage people to take charge of their illness—to understand it and to seek proper treatment. The website is written towards an audience of people who may have been recently diagnosed with depression, which is the group of people most likely to use the website. These components make the website a valuable source for anyone looking for information about depression.

Depression. (2009, September 23).

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/complete-index.shtml>

This website, published by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), covers the basics of what depression is, the different forms of depression, the signs and symptoms, causes, and treatment. It also goes specifically into how different groups of people such as men, women, older adults, and children and adolescents experience depression. At the end of the article, the authors write about what a person can do if he/she is depressed and what to do if a person is in crisis.

The website provides a good explanation of the treatment available for depression, including a good explanation of the different types of medication (SSRIs, SNRIs, and MAOIs) and their possible side effects. The website also provides a good explanation of the FDA's "black box" warning on antidepressants, explaining that this is the most serious type of warning that can be put on a prescription drug, and the reason for it is because of the risk increased suicidal thinking or attempts as a side effect of antidepressants, particularly when a person is just beginning to take them or has recently switched types of medication.

The website is well-written and easy to understand. The links at the top that take the reader to the various topics within the article are also useful. In general, this is a good resource for someone who is looking for information on depression.

Major depressive disorder. (2010, May 19).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_depressive_disorder

The following topics are discussed within this website concerning depression: symptoms and signs, causes, diagnosis, prevention, management, prognosis, epidemiology, history, and sociocultural aspects. The website provides a thorough list of symptoms and signs, and it includes information about how signs and symptoms can look different in children than they do in adults with depression. Within the section about the causes of depression, the article basis the explanation of the causes of depression on the biopsychosocial model, which proposes that biological, psychological, and social factors all play a role in causing depression. In the discussion of the diagnosis of depression, the article explains how general practitioners can conduct diagnostic assessment of depression. Also within this section is a brief explanation of what the DSM-IV-TR says about depression and an explanation of a major depressive episode. The prevention and management sections of the site are really sections containing information

about different types of treatment such as medications and psychotherapy. The prognosis section explains the effectiveness of treatment and the likelihood of recurrence in those suffering from depression. In the epidemiology section, the authors explain that depression is a major cause of morbidity worldwide and that it frequently occurs with other psychiatric problems such as anxiety disorders. The history section of the website provides information about the diagnostic history of the illness, explaining how depression received its name and how it has been diagnosed and treated throughout history. The sociocultural section provides insight into the fact that depression is not conceptualized the same in every culture. There is also a short list of historical figures who most likely suffered from depression, including Abraham Lincoln.

Wikipedia, although not considered a valid source of information in academia, can be a great resource for the public. This was one of few websites online that actually referred to depression with its clinical name: major depressive disorder. The history and sociocultural sections of the website are also unique to it, and they provide important information for people looking for information about depression. Another useful aspect of the website are the pictures because they give visual images of concepts such as a synapse in the brain, and there are links associated with the pictures so that people can learn more about any particular aspect of depression that they are interested in.

Smith, M., Saisan, J., Segal, R. & Segal, J. (2009, December). *Understanding depression*.

http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_signs_types_diagnosis_treatment.htm

Within this website is information about what depression is, signs and symptoms of depression, depression's connection to suicide, specifically how depression affects teen, older adults, men, and women. The website has information about types of depression such as major depression, atypical depression, dysthymia, and seasonal affective disorder. One the site, there is

also a short paragraph about bipolar disorder and its connection to depression. Finally, there is information about the causes and risk factors of depression, and at the end of the webpage is information about recovering from depression.

This website provides a thorough list of the signs and symptoms of depression. It also includes a sort of checklist for people to go through if they think they might be depressed, which could be helpful, but could also lead someone to try to diagnose him/herself. There is a list of warning signs of suicide, which is important when educating the public about depression since the two are so closely linked. There is also a phone number listed on the website for people to call if they are feeling suicidal.

One limitation of the website is that it suggests that people seek professional help after they have tried to ask for help from family and friends and made lifestyle changes such as exercising and eating healthy foods. These suggestions support the idea that depression is something that people should be able to overcome on their own instead of an illness in need of treatment.