

## National Health Observances

### July

Family Reunion Month  
National Make a Difference to Children Month  
Bereaved Parents Month  
National Parks & Recreation Month  
National Grilling Month  
Social Wellness Month

### August

American Adventures Month  
Happiness Happens Month  
American Indian Heritage Month  
What Will Your Legacy Be Month  
Get Ready for Kindergarten Month  
National Immunization Awareness Month

### Week of August 1 - 7

Simplify Your Life Week  
Single Working Womens Week

### Week of August 8 - 14

Exercise with Your Children Week

### Week of August 22 - 26

National Safe at Home Week

### Week of August 25 - 31

Be Kind to Humankind Week

### September

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  
Baby Safety Month  
College Savings Month  
National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month  
National Preparedness Month  
National Self-Awareness Month

## Depression: Understanding the Disorder

*Depression is no mere slump in mood.*

Unlike “the blues,” which tend to clear up in a few days, depression frequently is both prolonged and recurring. It can’t be ignored, and it can’t be joked or whistled away. Sufferers of depression are likely to experience:

- prolonged loss of interest in home, work and personal appearance.
- loss of interest in sexual activity.
- sudden changes and excesses in eating or sleeping habits.
- frequent, uncontrollable crying.
- lingering, unfocused nervousness or grouchiness.
- persistent feelings of hopelessness and futility.

There are both physical and psychological causes of depression. Illness and chemical imbalances are physical causes. Psychological or emotional causes include distressing or threatening changes—death of a loved one, divorce or loss of a job—and continuing problems of emotional dependency and inadequate self-esteem.



Untreated, depression can be debilitating and can lead to suicide. It’s a serious condition requiring serious treatment.

### Treatment for Depression

If you suspect you suffer depression, having a medical checkup is your first step. Even depression with emotional causes may call for treatment with medication, and that’s a decision that must be made by a doctor who, in turn, must know the state of your physical health.

If your depression has a physical cause, treating the underlying illness may be the cure. Depression resulting from chemical imbalance can also be treated medically.

## A Checklist for Depression

What's the difference between a bad case of the blues and the painful mental disorder known as depression? According to the experts, impaired functioning is usually a clear-cut indication of clinical depression.

Here's a quick checklist of depression symptoms. If the list sounds familiar, you may want to see a counselor or a psychiatrist.

- **Depressive Mood:** Do you suffer from feelings of gloom, helplessness or pessimism for days at a time?
- **Sleep Disturbance:** Do you have trouble falling asleep at night or trouble staying asleep -- waking up in the middle of the night or too early in the morning? Are you sleeping too much?
- **Chronically fatigued:** Do you frequently feel tired or lack energy?
- **Isolation:** Have you stopped meeting friends for lunch? Are you ever afraid to leave the house? Increasing isolation and diminished interest or pleasure in activities are major signs of depression.
- **Appetite Disturbance:** Are you eating far less than usual -- or far more? Severe and continuing appetite disturbance is often an indication of depression.
- **Inability to Concentrate:** If you can't seem to focus on even routine tasks, it's probably time to get some help.
- **Dependence on Mood-Altering Substances:** If you depend on



alcohol or other drugs to make it through the day, you may be suffering from depression. Often the substance abuse causes symptoms which mimic the appearance of clinical depression, but are in fact due wholly to the drug use.

- Feeling a sense of inappropriate guilt or worthlessness.
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal idealization / attempt.

*Depression....continued from Page 1*

Especially among elderly people, combinations of medications taken for various medical needs can produce depression. A doctor will want to get a complete list of all medicines you've been taking.

If your depression is traceable to an event or situation, professional counseling or therapy may be helpful. Call your EAP for a referral to a counselor or therapist.

### Self-Care Tips

In addition to seeking professional help, there are some things you can do which may help you feel better. Follow a healthy, well rounded diet, and get regular exercise. Aerobic

exercise, such as walking, bicycling and swimming, is recommended.

Scientists theorize that such exercise releases "feel good" hormones in the brain which can lift your spirits and help you feel more optimistic and emotionally in control. Again, these are often beneficial, but they're not an alternative to professional attention. Talk to a health professional.

*Parlay International © 2011*

## Cascade Centers, Inc. EAP Access

Cascade Centers provides assessment, short-term problem solving, referrals, training, and consultations to a wide array of employers and companies.

Call Cascade Centers to speak to a counselor on the phone, schedule an in-person appointment, or get the resources you need.



*Making Connections, Creating Solutions*

1-800-433-2320  
[www.cascadecenters.com](http://www.cascadecenters.com)