

# Depression and the Pandemic

It's fair to say that the last several months have been difficult for everyone. Increased isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest, worries about work, a child's education, and finances, and the loss of favorite activities have all made 2020 a tumultuous year. Add in life's normal problems and stresses, and it's no wonder that the CDC reports that there has been a significant increase in feelings of anxiety and depression in adults.

The extra stress we're all experiencing may make some people more prone to feelings of depression, or increase depressive symptoms in those who already have them. Common signs to watch for include:

- ▶ Changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating or struggles with memory
- ▶ Worsening symptoms in existing health concerns
- ▶ More frequent use of alcohol or drugs, including tobacco
- ▶ Persistent feelings of fear, worry, anxiety, or hopelessness
- ▶ Suicidal thoughts (please seek immediate assistance)

While anyone may be susceptible to feelings of depression, people who could be more vulnerable to them at this time include:

- ▶ People at higher risk of complications from COVID-19
- ▶ Children and teens, especially when isolated from peers
- ▶ Caregivers for children, the elderly, or disabled loved ones
- ▶ Those who work in health care and other essential positions
- ▶ People who have lost their jobs or had work hours reduced
- ▶ Individuals experiencing extreme isolation

If these feelings persist for more than a few days, contact your physician. Other ways to manage depression include:

- ▶ Engage in physical activity
- ▶ Spend time in nature
- ▶ Practice yoga or another mindful pursuit
- ▶ Make time for self-care by engaging in a favorite activity
- ▶ Talk to trusted friend or loved one about how you are feeling

If you are struggling with depression, or simply feel "off" after so many months of pandemic stress, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.



The above information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of medical advice.

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Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

