



Depression



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Aetna Better Health® of Virginia

Make the mind-body connection

If you have a mental illness like depression, you might be taking medicine and getting therapy. Those are two great steps to help yourself feel better.

Ready to take even more? Feeling better isn't just about your mind. It's about your body too. Here are five ways to nurture them both:

1. **Get your moves on.** Exercise can give your self-esteem and mood a boost. Being active most days of the week is a good goal, but you can start small. Take a short walk — or turn on some music and dance.
2. **Eat healthy foods.** To give your body the nutrients it needs, fill your plate

with lean protein, whole grains, healthy fat, fruits and vegetables. Try to limit sugars and unhealthy fat.

3. **Sleep well.** Ask your therapist for tips if you're having trouble getting enough quality sleep at night.
4. **Send stress away.** Make time for activities that soothe you. Maybe that's deep breathing, a hobby or time with friends.
5. **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They put your health at risk and may make your symptoms worse. If you need help to quit, ask your doctor or therapist.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.org)

4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.
3. Take your medications.
4. Aim for healthy habits.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ.gov)

 Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to [AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/virginia) or call Member Services at **1-800-279-1878** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

Does depression ever go away?

Depression doesn't have to last forever.

Some types last longer or come and go more often than other types. Some occur only after giving birth. Others crop up during certain times of the year, such as winter.

The good news is that depression in any form is very treatable. If you have depression, your doctor might:

- Give you medicine.
- Refer you to a therapist.
- Do both. (Medicine and therapy often work better together.)

If you opt for medicine, it's important to give it time. Medicine for depression can take four to eight weeks to start working. Plus, it might take more time to find the medicine and dose that works best for you. Keep in touch with your providers about how you're feeling. Tell them about any concerns or side effects you have.



As you stick with your treatment plan, you may start to feel better. In time, some people might not need medicine or therapy anymore, but it's not safe to stop without talking to your providers first.

Remember, you're a team. Together, you can find your way through this.

Sources: American Psychological Association (APA.org); National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH.NIH.gov)

Know the risks of opioids

Opioids are strong pain medicines. They're easy to get addicted to.

If you need help with pain, talk to your doctor about safer options. If you use an opioid, take the smallest dose you can for the shortest time possible, and ask about Narcan (naloxone). It could save your life.

Want to be drug-free?

Call the National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP** (**1-800-662-4357**).

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA.gov)

Need help? Your care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Contact us



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Member Services: **1-800-279-1878**
(TTY: 711 or **1-800-828-1120**)
Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM
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This newsletter contains general health information that should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs. If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services at the number above and ask for the Care Management Department.

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