



Depression



[AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia](https://AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia)

Aetna Better Health® of Virginia

## Make a crisis prevention plan

Depression is a serious illness. If you have depression, it can change how you feel and think. It can even make you feel like hurting yourself.

It's good to remember this, though: Those thoughts are a symptom of your illness. You won't always feel that way — and treatment can help you enjoy life again.

Treatments for depression take time to work. That's why it's important to stick with them. In the meantime, take steps like these to protect yourself:

### Put dangers out of reach.

Get rid of any weapons, pills or other things you might use to hurt yourself.

**Manage your moods.** Work with a therapist to learn what sets off a crisis, how to spot your warning signs and what to do about them.

**Make a list of lifelines.** These are trusted family members and friends you can talk to if you start to feel bad. Have the numbers of your doctor and the suicide hotline (**988**) close by or in your phone too. If you have thoughts of suicide, call one of your lifelines or **911** — or go to a hospital right away.

*Sources: Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSAlliance.org); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SuicidePreventionLifeline.org)*

## It's not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.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://AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia) or call Member Services at **1-800-279-1878 (TTY: 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

## Taking antidepressants wisely

Sad. Hopeless. Empty. That's how many people with depression feel.

If you've been diagnosed with depression, there are things you can do to feel better. Treatment can help you enjoy life again.

If your treatment plan includes medicines, here are a few things to know:

**They don't all work the same way.** Different antidepressants work in different ways. They're meant to change the brain chemicals that regulate mood.

**They need time to work.** You may need to take them for up to six weeks to feel the full effect.

**Some people aren't helped by their first antidepressant.** You may need to try several types — or a combination — to find what works best for you.

**Don't stop taking your medicine.** You may want to stop taking your medicine as you start to feel better, but don't. If you stop too soon, your depression may come back.



### **Talk therapy may help your medicine work better.**

Antidepressants often work best when combined with talk therapy. Seeing your therapist regularly can help you stay on track with your treatment goals and learn helpful coping techniques.

*Sources: National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH.NIH.gov); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA.gov)*

## Caregivers: Seek the help you deserve

Need support? Ask your loved one's care manager about services that may be open to you.

### **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: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK.NIH.gov)*

### Contact us



Aetna Better Health® of Virginia  
9881 Mayland Drive  
Richmond, VA 23233

Member Services: **1-800-279-1878**  
(TTY: 711 or 1-800-828-1120)  
Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM  
**AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia**

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