

# [Adolescent depression: causes, effects and treatments](https://assignbuster.com/adolescent-depression-causes-effects-and-treatments/)

Teenage Depression

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Depression is defined as a medical condition in which a person feels very sad, hopeless, unimportant and is often unable to live in a normal way (Merriam-Webster’s online Dictionary, n. d.). In 2004 alone, it was reported that 11. 2 percent of teens suffered from depression (Depression in Children and Adolescents, n. d. para. 1). Symptoms that adolescents tend to show when suffering from depression are difficulty with relationships, loss of interest in hobbies, persistent sadness, feeling of hopelessness and the feeling of guilt and/or worthlessness. There are many possible results that stem from depression, such as suicide, substance abuse and alcohol abuse. For various reasons, people fail to realize that majority of the youth in the U. S suffer from depression. People in todays society need to recognize the severity of depression and provide better treatments for their youth.

In the past, people did not believe that children and adolescents could go through depression, but today teens show so many signs of depression that it is impossible to ignore. By the time 11 percent of adolescents turn 18 years old they have at least one depressive episode (Merikangas, n. d). One of the leading causes of disability in Americans is major depressive episode, according to the World Health Organization (Merikangas, n. d). The reason depression in adolescents has been ignored so long is that it can be very difficult to tell whether an adolescent is showing symptoms of depression or just going through a phase (Depression in Children and Adolescents, n. d). Before reaching adulthood about 20 to 30 percent of adolescent have one major depressive episode. 25 percent of adults who suffer from depression, started to show signs of depression in their adolescence (Schwarz, 2009). By 2020 depression will compete with heart disease as the “ health disorder with the highest disease burden in the world.”(Reuters, 2011)

Depression in adolescents can be caused by many things but three of the main factors are genetic causes, biological causes, and environmental causes. Genetic factors are traits that you may inherit from your parents (Definition of Genetics, n. d.). Some examples of genetic causes are adolescents with a relative who is or has been depressed is more likely to get depressed. The most common types of depression that runs in the family are bipolar depression and severe major depression (Kim, n. d). However just because depression runs in one’s family does not mean that he/she` will suffer from depression. Depression can also arise in adolescents who do not have a family history of depression

There has been a great deal of research that has been done to determine a biological cause, and after many years, researchers have concluded that depression may be caused by abnormal delivery of key neurotransmitters (chemical messengers to the brain)(National Institute of Mental Health, n. d). There are many neurotransmitters that can cause depression but one of the most essential neurotransmitters is serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical that helps deliver signals from one area of the brain to the other. Serotonin is also important for the well-being feelings, imbalances in the brain’s serotonin levels can cause depression (National Institute of Mental Health, n. d).

Environmental causes are the influences that one may have from social and cultural that shape a person’s life. There are many environmental causes that may contribute to depression, such as the loss of a loved one, a traumatic event in one’s life, and big changes in one’s life (Healthline Editorial Team, 2012). Events such as these can cause a person to start feeling hopeless. However some research states that getting depressed because of traumatic or stressful event is because that person already has depression. According to Dr. Nassir Ghaemi most people never suffer from depression after a major life event (Ghaemi, 2012).

Another environmental cause that can cause depression is bullying. Bullying is the ongoing physical or emotional victimization of one person from another person or a group of people (Bullying and Depression, n. d). Bullying can cause the victim to suffer from low self-esteem, and can also cause suicidal thoughts. People assume that only the child being bullied will suffer from depression in their life, but what they do not realize is that the bully is also at high risk of suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2011).

In the 1950’s and 1960’s doctors had started making a link between food and depression. Today we know that certain foods have a relation with depression (Laverie, 2010). Food additives are one of the many preservatives that contain synthetic chemicals, and research has proven that synthetic chemicals can cause many symptoms of depression to occur. Food additives are used to add flavor to foods, and to help make foods look more appealing. But the number one reason for using food additives is to help preserve food so that it can last longer (Bousch, n. d.). Research has proven that many food additives have a harmful effect for our health physically but also mentally. Just like food additives, industrial by-products have the same effect on one’s mental health. Industrial by-products are products that are produced using machines in factories (Merriam-Webster’s online Dictionary, n. d.). Some examples of food additives that have been proven to have a negative effect on mental health are foods that are identified as “ sugar-free” or “ diet” (Bousch, n. d) These foods all contain Aspartame, better known as artificial sweeteners. Aspartame can cause many diseases including depression. Another food additive to avoid is monosodium glutamate (MSG), an amino acid used in many frozen foods and chips. MSG can damage cells even to the point of death by over exciting them, and MSG can also affect neurological pathways. If many of these causes are not avoided, adolescents may suffer from depression which may have many consequences.

Depression, if left untreated, has many effects. One of effect of depression is substance abuse. Substance abuse and mental disorders usually co-occur in adolescence. Adolescence suffering from depression are usually in search of a way of making themselves feel better, which usually leads them to drugs and alcohol. Teens who try to self medicate marijuana and other drugs end up making their depression worse (Adolescence Depression and Substance Abuse, n. d). Drug abuse and alcohol abuse can also cause suicide because it can impair one’s judgment and increasing their impulsivity, which can cause them to make decisions without thinking of the consequences (Suicide and Depression, n. d).

Another effect depression can have on adolescents is a negative impact on school performance. Depression can cause lack of concentration which causes a disinterest in school. Also students tend to be more forgetful when suffering from depression, which causes them to forget about assignments, tests, and quizzes which can cause grades to go down. Another issue adolescents face in school is with insubordination. Depressed adolescents get into more fights and arguments with peers and teachers. School performance can also affect depression, for example doing poorly in school may have an effect on one’s self esteem. School also can be a trigger for stress, which is another cause of depression. Also, adolescents have trouble interacting with their peers which may discourage them from wanting to go to school (Depression, n. d).

One of the biggest consequences of leaving depression untreated is suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescents in the U. S. (Suicide Prevention, n. d). The number one cause for suicide is untreated depression (Caruso, n. d). There are many reasons why adolescents commit suicide but most of the time it’s because they think it’s the only solution to their problems and they are unable to see that they can turn their life around (Teenage Suicide, 1999). According to Center for Disease Control over 90 percent of the time someone commits suicide it is because they have a mental disorder that can be treated and if it were treated there would be a less number of suicides in the U. S (Suicide Prevention, n. d). Suicide shares many symptoms with depression but to a much more greater extent, for example extreme hopelessness, insomnia, heightened panic attacks, and irritability (Some Facts about Suicide and Depression, n. d).

Depression, unlike many other diseases, is treatable. There are many different approaches to treating depression such as antidepressants, psychotherapy, and electroconvulsive shock therapy. Antidepressants are used to balance chemicals in your brain called neurotransmitters (Greenlaw, n. d). Antidepressants help improve your mood, your appetite, and your sleep (Greenlaw, n. d). Like all medications, antidepressants have negative side effects, for example sometimes antidepressants can make some people feel suicidal, also antidepressants can cause nausea, weight gain, headaches, sweating, and diarrhea(Smith, Robinson, Segal, & Ramsey, 2014).

Psychotherapy is a series of ways of treating mental health, emotional and some psychiatric disorders (Psychotherapies, n. d). Another word for psychotherapy is talk therapy, psychotherapy involves having people understand their mental disorder (Psychotherapies, n. d). Psychotherapy also teaches one how to deal with stress and unhealthy thoughts. There are many different types of psychotherapy, because everyone responds differently to treatments. Some people may have to meet with the therapist alone whereas some people prefer to be with a group of people (Psychotherapies, n. d). There aren’t many negative side effects of psychotherapy, but one negative in choosing this method treatment is not always being able to find fully qualified therapists who can treat depression this way (Jollant, n. d).

Electroconvulsive therapy is when you pass electric currents through the brain to cause brain seizures (Mayo Clinic Staff). Electroconvulsive therapy can reverse certain symptoms of mental illnesses faster than other treatments (Mayo Clinic Staff, n. d). Electroconvulsive therapy is known to be the most effective treatment for severe depression (Szalavitz, 2012). One of the biggest negative effects of electroconvulsive therapy is memory loss (Side Effects and Risks, n. d). People may also suffer from cardiovascular complications, dental and oral trauma, and skin burns (Park, n. d).

Islam is a holistic religion, meaning that it has an impact on every aspect of one’s life. Everyone must face some trials and tribulations in life, it doesn’t matter how religious one person may be they can still be tested, as stated in this ayah in the Quran: “ Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “ We believe,” and will not be tested?” (Qur’an29: 2).

Islam teaches its believers never to despair and always have hope in Allah (swt). no matter how hard the situation maybe at the moment that Allah (swt) will also provide that person with relief afterwards (Quran 94: 5). Islam believes that shaytaan can make one feel like they’re being punished so one may tend to lose hope and forget that it may only be a test from Allah (swt) not a punishment. According to some, trials and tribulation can also strengthen one’s relationship with Allah (swt) (Bataski, 2011). When someone feels depressed or down at times Allah (swt) states in the quran to always turn to him because he is the only true source of light and guidance. People may go through difficult times in their lives but they should always know that Allah (swt) will always be there for them to turn to.

Society needs to recognize the importance of depression and should be able to equip it’s youth with treatments. If many people understood the causes of depression then maybe people would not ignore their symptoms and would go and get treatment for themselves or their children. If depression stays ignored then and nothing is done to help today’s youth then there will be a rise in the number of deaths by suicide.

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