



Lifestyles

Depression handbook

A guide for Blue Care Network,
BCN AdvantageSM, BCN Service Company
and BlueCaid members





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What is depression?

Depression leaves one feeling hopeless, worthless and unable to cope. It's a medical condition that is common and treatable. It can be triggered by:

- Stressful life events
- Illness
- Medicine
- Hormone levels

Sometimes, you might not know why you're depressed. If you find yourself struggling with feelings of sadness, stress or fatigue that won't go away, there is help.

Signs of depression

See your doctor or behavioral health professional if you have five or more of the following symptoms for more than two weeks:

- Your sad or anxious mood doesn't go away.
- You sleep too much or too little.
- Your weight or appetite changes.
- You lose pleasure or interest in things.
- You feel restless or irritable.
- You feel sick even after you have had treatment for the illness.
- You have trouble thinking, remembering or deciding things.
- You feel tired or lose energy.
- You feel guilty, hopeless or worthless.
- You have thoughts of suicide or death (get professional help immediately).

Treatment for depression

Your doctor can evaluate your symptoms and give you a physical exam to rule out other health problems or medicines as the cause. Treatment may include medicine and counseling.

Using antidepressant medicine

Medicines can help your mood and relieve symptoms by restoring the balance of chemicals in your brain. Antidepressants are not

addictive and will not change your personality. Some important things to keep in mind when taking a new antidepressant medicine:

- Antidepressants can take three to four weeks to start working and may take up to six weeks to work in people age 65 and older.
- If your medicine doesn't seem to be working, call your doctor. Most often, your medicine just needs more time to work. Sometimes, your doctor may need to change the dose or prescribe a different medicine.
- Take your medicine exactly as your doctor has told you. Never stop taking your medicine or change your dose until you have talked to your doctor — even if you feel better.

Also, if someone other than your primary care physician prescribes medicine for you, let your primary care physician know. He or she should be aware of all the medicines you are taking including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements.



Using a behavioral health professional

Talking with a behavioral health care professional can help you understand your feelings and cope with problems and stresses that may have triggered your depression. To seek help, call the number on the back of your ID card. When you call, you'll speak to a care manager who will evaluate your needs and arrange for the services. You do not need a referral from your primary care physician.

About Disease Management's mailings

BCN sends confidential information about depression to all members age 18 and older who have been seen by their doctor or by a behavioral health professional and have filled a prescription for an antidepressant medicine.

If you have questions about this mailing, if you feel you have been sent this information in error, or if you don't want to receive more information, please call the Disease Management department at 800-392-4247. TTY users call 800-257-9980. The department is staffed by registered nurses who are available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Your rights and responsibilities

As a member in our programs you have rights and responsibilities.

A right is what you can expect from us. A responsibility is what we can expect from you.

You have the right to:

- Quit the program at any time by calling Disease Management.
- Get the name of the program manager so you can get more information, ask questions or ask for a change in the way the program works.
- Talk to your doctor or to us about the care you should get.

Your right to privacy

Privacy is important to us. We want you to know that we follow special rules to be sure your information is kept private. You may call Customer Service to get a copy of our privacy notice or view it on the Web:

BCN and BCN Service Company members go to **MiBCN.com**.

BCN Advantage members go to **MiBCN.com/medicare**.

BlueCaid members go to **MiBCN.com/bluecaid**.

- Get information you can understand.
- Get information about our programs and services, their staff qualifications and contracts.
- Work with us to help make your health care decisions.
- Tell us about any problems or complaints you have using our Grievance Program.
- Be treated with respect.
- Ask us to act as your patient advocate.
- Know that we respect your health care privacy and we follow state and federal rules about your privacy.

You have the responsibility to:

- Tell us if you don't want to be in our program.
- Follow your doctor's advice about your care.
- Talk to your doctor honestly about your health so you can be cared for in the right way.

We do not advertise, market or promote specific products or services to members or doctors when discussing your health problems with you or your doctor or in any of our program materials. We do not have any financial ownership arrangements with other entities engaged in advertising, marketing or providing good and services.

Working with your doctor

Our programs work with you and your doctor. We send your doctor information about national standards of care to help treat you. It's important that you make and keep appointments with your doctor and ask questions about your care. Your doctor is your health partner.

Staying healthy

What about shots?

Get a flu shot before the flu gets you. Every fall you should get a flu shot. It's part of your benefits.

Flu is a serious virus that can make you really sick, especially for people who have [insert disease]. Before getting the shot, let your doctor know if you ever had an allergy to eggs or to an earlier flu shot. People who are over age 65, those who have chronic illness (like heart trouble or asthma), and small children should get a shot. Other shots you may need:

- Pneumonia
- Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis

Common symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle aches

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at **[cdc.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)**.

BCN does not control this Web site and is not responsible for its content.

BlueHealthConnection®: Your connection to care

Our BlueHealthConnection programs help you stay healthy, get better or improve your life while living with an illness. Our programs give you the information, tools and help you'll need to make good health choices. We offer:

Health Education message line

800-637-2972

800-257-9980 (TTY)

24 hours a day, seven days a week

Disease Management programs

800-392-4247

800-257-9980 (TTY)

8:30 a.m. to 5 pm. Monday through Friday

Our comprehensive programs, designed in partnership with doctors, can help you manage diseases like depression, diabetes, heart disease and more.

Care Management

Case managers provide one-on-one education and counseling as well as arrange care for you if you have a serious medical need. Your doctor will sign you up for this program. For more information, call Customer Service.

Quit the Nic smoking cessation program

800-811-1764

800-240-3050 (TTY)

24 hours a day, seven days a week

The products and services described above are neither offered nor guaranteed under our contract with the Medicare program. In addition, they are not subject to the Medicare appeals process. Any disputes regarding these products and services may be subject to the BCN Advantage grievance process.

Health information online for BCN and BCN Service Company members: MiBCN.com

(These services are not yet available for BCN Advantage or BlueCaid members) BlueHealthConnection offers members medical and fitness information. Registered members can get personalized information and other custom features:

- Take a free BlueHealthConnection health risk appraisal to receive a personalized health status report. You can also sign up for an online health coach.
- Access personal health quizzes, assessment tools, tracking logs, body mass index and target heart rate calculators.
- Search an online health information encyclopedia and drug guide.
- Use Healthcare Advisor™ to research a condition and learn about cost treatment options. You can also compare hospitals using criteria that matter to you.



Disease Management programs

800-392-4247

800-257-9980 (TTY)

8:30 a.m. to 5 pm. Monday through Friday

Customer Service

Call the number on the back of your ID card



BCN AdvantageSM



Medicare and more

Blue Care Network, BCN Service Company and BlueCaid of Michigan are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. BCN provides health management programs on behalf of BCN Service Company and BlueCaid members. Blue Care Network contracts with the federal government to offer BCN Advantage, a Medicare-approved HMO.