

How your provider will help treat your depression



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There are several steps your provider can take to help treat your depression. Your provider may use a method of treatment called “step therapy” to help improve your symptoms of depression. This usually involves prescribing an antidepressant medication and may include counseling (also known as “therapy” or “talk therapy”). Your provider will continue to evaluate your condition until the correct combination of therapy and medication has the most impact with the fewest side effects. Treatment will vary depending on the individual.

Here are some of the steps your provider might take in treating your depression.

1. Treatment will start with a thorough evaluation, including a screening test for depression. A common test is the PHQ-9, which looks at the impact of depression on various areas of your life.
2. Your provider may prescribe a course of counseling, which will help you learn how to manage your emotions and thoughts to further improve your mood.
3. In addition, your provider may also prescribe a medication dose for four weeks along with counseling. They may make recommendations about diet and exercise that have been shown to help with depression.
4. You will be evaluated every four to six weeks. During these evaluations, your provider may have you retake the same depression questionnaire that you first took to diagnose your depression. This will help you and your provider track any improvements in mood and determine the effectiveness of your treatment plan. If needed, your provider may change your medication dose to help improve your symptoms.
5. If there's no improvement by the second follow-up visit, your provider may request that you see a psychiatrist, who prescribes specialized medications for mood and emotions. At this time, other medications may also be considered.
6. Your provider will continue to evaluate your progress.

It's important for you to remain on your medications and follow any diet and exercise recommendations. It's also important to go to your therapy appointments.

Medications for depression require some time to take effect.