



Your Health Matters! By Angela Kwok (pharmacist, Cunderdin Pharmacy)

Understanding Depression and Anxiety

What Causes Depression?

While the exact cause of depression is unclear, there are several risk factors in depression such as:

A personal or family history of depression - depression tends to run in family

Personality:

People who have low self-esteem, perfectionists, self-critical or tendency to worry a lot have a higher risk of developing depression

Serious medical illness: can trigger depression directly or contribute to depression due to stress of worry if it involves long-term management of the illness or chronic pain

Drug and alcohol use - can lead to and result from depression

Life events: Researches suggest continuing difficulties such as long term unemployment, an uncaring, abusive relationship, long-term isolation or prolong stress exposure can cause depression. However, combination of recent events can trigger people who are already at risk of depression.

Signs and Symptoms of Depression:

Physical such as fatigue, lose of energy, unable to sleep, or sleep too much, muscle aches, change of appetite, significant weight change, agitation or slowing of body movement or speech

Behaviour: Loss of interest in most activities, poor concentration, withdrawal from friends/ family

Thought & Feeling: depress/sad mood, excessive guilt, feels like a failure, worthless, recurrent thought of deaths or suicide (note: people who plans to suicide is severely unwell)

Treatment: Combination of psychological therapy such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and use of antidepressant are recommended

Common antidepressants include: **SSRI** (e.g. Sertaline, Citalopram, Escitalopram, Paroxetine, Fluoxetine) **SNRIs** (e.g. Venlafaxine, Desvenlafaxine, Duloxetine) **NaSSAs**- Mirtazapine **TCA** (e.g. Nortriptyline; Clomipramine; Dothiepin; Imipramine; Amitriptyline) and **RIMAs** (Moclobemide)

Anxiety is the most common mental condition in Australia, with 25% of the population will experience anxiety. Treatment depends on the type of anxiety the person experiences.

The 6 most common type of anxiety includes:

General anxiety disorder (GAD), social phobia, specific phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and panic disorder

Some common symptoms of anxiety include:

Hot and Cold flushes, Racing heart, Tightening of the chest
Snowballing worries, obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviour

Effective treatment helps people with anxiety to learn how to control the condition so it doesn't control them.

Mild anxiety may be relieved with lifestyle changes (e.g. regular exercise) and self-help (e.g. online e-therapies)

Moderate to severe anxiety: In addition to psychological treatment (CBT, behaviour therapy), medications (e.g. antidepressant and/or benzodiazepines) are also commonly required.

For more information about medicines for depression or anxiety, talk to your doctor or pharmacist

Life Line 13 11 14 - National 24 hours counseling service Useful Websites:

Beyond Blue <https://www.beyondblue.org.au> Black Dog Institute <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au>

