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### **What You Should Know About Depression**

Everyone feels "down" at certain times in his or her life. Short periods of sadness and discouragement are quite normal. But a person who cannot get over these feelings within two weeks may be suffering from depression. Depression can cause great emotional pain, and can lead to suicide. Fortunately, it is one of the most treatable of all mental illnesses. There are a number of medications available that can help those suffering from depression return to happy, productive lives.

The first step in treating depression is recognizing the early warning signs:

- Noticeable change of appetite
- Noticeable change of sleeping habits
- Loss of interest and pleasure in activities you 'enjoy
- Loss of energy or feeling fatigued
- Feeling worthless
- Feeling hopeless
- Not being able to concentrate or think
- Not being able to make decisions
- Recurring thoughts of suicide
- Overwhelming feelings of sadness or grief
- Waking up at least two hours earlier than normal
- Disturbed thinking or beliefs not based on reality
- Suffering from unexplained headaches or stomach aches, or other ailments

Should you suffer from four or more of these symptoms for a period of longer than two weeks, see your doctor for a professional opinion.

For more information on depression and mental illness ask your doctor.

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Revised Feb 9th 2006

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