

## Depression & The Menopause

Depression is the feeling of extreme sadness lasting for more than a few weeks, often with no specific cause that can be identified, however, it interferes with everyday life. Depression often leaves you feeling worthless, oversleeping/insomnia, difficulty in making decisions and can cause changes in your sleeping and eating patterns.

The menopause is a particularly vulnerable time for women because they are experiencing hormonal changes making them at a higher risk for depression. It can take your body time to get used to the declining levels of oestrogen and progesterone as you go through this stage of your life. Once the body has adapted to the hormone shift, you will often find the depression starts lifting.

You are most vulnerable to depression at the perimenopause stage when reproductive hormones are shifting.

Women going through the menopause are four times more likely to suffer from depression. Depression should not be dismissed or overlooked, it is a medical condition that can lead to further complications and requires the attention of doctors.

If you are able to identify what has triggered your low mood or depression this will be helpful in being able to find the most effective treatment for you.

It is important to discuss all of your symptoms, including any personal or family history of depression, with your doctor.

There is a wide range of drugs and anti-depressants available to treat menopausal depression. It is however important to remember some have side effects as well as noting that some are more effective than others which is totally independent from one person to the next. You will need to spend time with your doctor to find a treatment suitable for you.

There are also a range of therapies that have proven effects in improving depression, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

One in four women with menopause are concerned about their ability to cope with life. You should not face this alone I would always recommend consulting your doctor who can help and support you through this difficult time.