



- **Co-Occurrence** — Clinical depression is more likely to occur along with certain illnesses, such as stroke, heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes and hormonal disorders. This is called "co-occurring depression." Any depressive symptoms with other illnesses should be reported to your doctor. It is important that co-occurring depression be treated in addition to the physical illness.
 - Depression can "co-occur" in people who suffer from other mental illnesses such as eating disorders or anxiety disorders including panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.
 - In an effort to cope with the emotional pain caused by depression, some people try to "self-medicate" through the abuse of alcohol or illegal drugs. Therefore, depression can also "co-occur" with alcohol and/or substance abuse.
- **Medications** — Some medications can cause clinical depression. Before taking new medications or over-the-counter drugs, a doctor should be consulted about possible side effects.
- **Genetic** — A family history of clinical depression increases the risk for developing the illness. However, clinical depression can occur in people who have had no family history of clinical depression.
- **Situational** — Difficult life events, including divorce, financial problems, moving to a new place, the death of a loved one, or any significant loss, can contribute to clinical depression.

What are the causes of clinical depression?

Many things can contribute to clinical depression. For some people, a number of factors seem to be involved, while for others a single factor can cause the illness. Often times, people become depressed for no apparent reason. Regardless of the factors involved, clinical depression needs to be diagnosed and treated.

- **Biological** — People with depression typically have too little or too much of certain brain chemicals, called "neurotransmitters." Changes in these brain chemicals may cause, or contribute to, clinical depression.
- **Cognitive** — People with negative thinking patterns — people who are pessimistic, have low self-esteem, worry too much or feel they have little control over life events — are more likely to develop clinical depression.
- **Gender** — Women are twice as likely as men to experience clinical depression. While the reasons for this are still unclear, they may include the hormonal changes women go through during menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause. Other reasons may include the stress of the many roles and responsibilities women have, including homemaker, mother, employee and spouse. In some cases, being a victim of abuse, or poverty or of low self-esteem may contribute to an increased risk of clinical depression.

