

# TOURETTE SYNDROME AND DEPRESSION – HOW ARE THEY LINKED?

HAVING TOURETTE SYNDROME MEANS YOU MAY BE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION. HOWEVER, THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS DEPRESSION CAN BE MANAGED AND TREATED.

## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is when someone experiences low mood for prolonged periods, often in combination with reduced enjoyment in activities. Evidence tells us depression may be more common in people with Tourette syndrome (TS). This can change how someone may feel about themselves and interfere with many aspects of their life.

There is no single cause of depression, it can happen to anyone for a variety of reasons. Feeling down or sad occasionally, or once something difficult has happened, is something everyone can experience. However, when these feelings persist for a long time, it could be a sign of depression.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Depression can also cause physical symptoms such as aches and pains, slow movement, weight loss/gain from decreased/increased appetite, difficulty getting to sleep or sleeping too much.*

## Symptoms

Depression can feel different for different people, but the common symptoms include:

- Feeling down or low in mood
- Losing interest in things they would usually enjoy
- Feel low in energy or tired all the time
- Feeling upset or tearful
- Feeling more irritable
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Negative feelings about themselves or the future
- Feeling detached from life and other people
- Feelings of emptiness or feeling numb
- Having new problems concentrating

These symptoms can have an impact on how a person may act in their day-to-day life affecting their work and relationships with others. Changes in someone's behaviour may be a sign that they are depressed. They may isolate themselves, withdraw from friends and family or stop doing things they used to do.



## DEPRESSION AND TOURETTE SYNDROME

**Depression may occur in people with TS for a few different reasons:**

- The psychological impact of tics on everyday life may lead to low self-esteem, embarrassment and social isolation, which may play a role in the development of depression
- Some people with TS may feel stigmatised (disapproved of) because of their tics and this can worsen the symptoms of depression
- Tics can also have a physical impact; they can cause pain/discomfort, which can affect mood
- The imbalance in neurotransmitters (chemical messengers in the brain) that is thought to cause involuntary tics may also cause low mood

## HAVING SUICIDAL FEELINGS

From time to time, some people living with TS may experience thoughts about taking their own life. While this is worrying, it may be more common than you think and there is help available.

If you have started to have thoughts about suicide, it's important to tell someone, even if it feels difficult to talk about. Contact your GP for help as soon as possible. If this is not possible or you would prefer not to speak to your GP, you can call the Samaritans on 116 123 at any time of the day or night.

If you are a parent, friend or relative of a person who is experiencing suicidal thoughts, be there to support them and encourage them to get professional help.

**If you or someone you know is in immediate danger from suicide, call 999 or take them to A&E.**

## WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR DEPRESSION?

If you think that you or your child may be experiencing depression, the first step you can take is to contact your GP. They can refer you to a specialist for further assessment and treatment if necessary. There are many ways to treat depression, with the main treatments being talking therapies and medication.

### TALKING THERAPIES

There are different types of talking therapy, such as Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), Interpersonal therapy (IPT), Behavioural activation therapy and Psychodynamic psychotherapy. The type of talking therapy prescribed can vary depending on the type and severity of depression.

### MEDICATION

Medication that treats depression (antidepressants) may be prescribed by a doctor, especially if the symptoms are moderate or severe. Antidepressants can be used alongside talking therapies. There are several different types of antidepressants, which typically work by increasing the neurotransmitters (chemicals in the brain) linked to mood and positive emotions. In most cases, antidepressants take a few weeks to work and you will usually need to take them for several months, even after you start feeling better. All medications have the potential to cause side effects, so it is a good idea to talk to your doctor about these before starting treatment.

### SELF-CARE

Alongside a treatment plan, self-care can also be a good way to help with depression. This can include regular exercise, a healthy diet, sleeping well and looking after your hygiene. Ensuring that you have social contact with other people can also be helpful, such as talking with friends and family.

Although self-care can be helpful in improving symptoms, it is important to speak to your GP if you think you are experiencing depression.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

### Mind

A national charity offering advice and support to those experiencing a mental health issue:

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

For Support Call: 0300 102 1234

For Information Call: 0300 123 3393

### NHS Choices

The official website for the National Health Service in England:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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