

MOOD Manager

helping **you** understand
your depression



Mood Manager Information Leaflet

- This DVD will help you to:
- Understand depression
- Understand the medication you have been prescribed
- Improve your physical and mental health

This DVD also contains information about support services available in Wandsworth.

The Mood Manager DVD has been developed by the Public Health Department (Wandsworth Council) and can be viewed in: English; Tamil; Somali; Polish; Bengali; Urdu

If you have any questions or concerns about your diagnosis please talk to your GP.

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL DEPRESSION QUERIES

What caused it?

Depression is often preceded by stressful life events though this is not always the case. There are many theories about what causes depression from loss in early childhood to an inherited genetic predisposition. There are many other triggers in life such as stress at work, in the home or after a loss of a family member or friend. It is unlikely that there is any single cause. Different things may cause depression in different people. We each have our own set of risk factors for depression.

Will it go on its own?

Mild depression may go away on its own, but more severe depression is liable to take a long time if it does. The best approach is to take antidepressants and have some sort of therapy such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which has been illustrated on this DVD.

Will it recur?

Your depression will probably recur if you stop taking the antidepressants too soon. It might recur in future if you have a predisposition to depression. However lifestyle changes in physical activity and therapy can prevent relapse.

Should I tell my family/colleagues that I have depression?

People often feel worse when they are depressed because they do not tell anyone and this makes them feel more alienated. In addition, it stops family, friends and colleagues from helping and trying to understand. It helps them to understand why you are behaving as you are and more likely to be able to help and offer suggestions and support. However, who you tell and how much is your decision.

GENERAL ANTIDEPRESSANT QUERIES

How do antidepressants work?

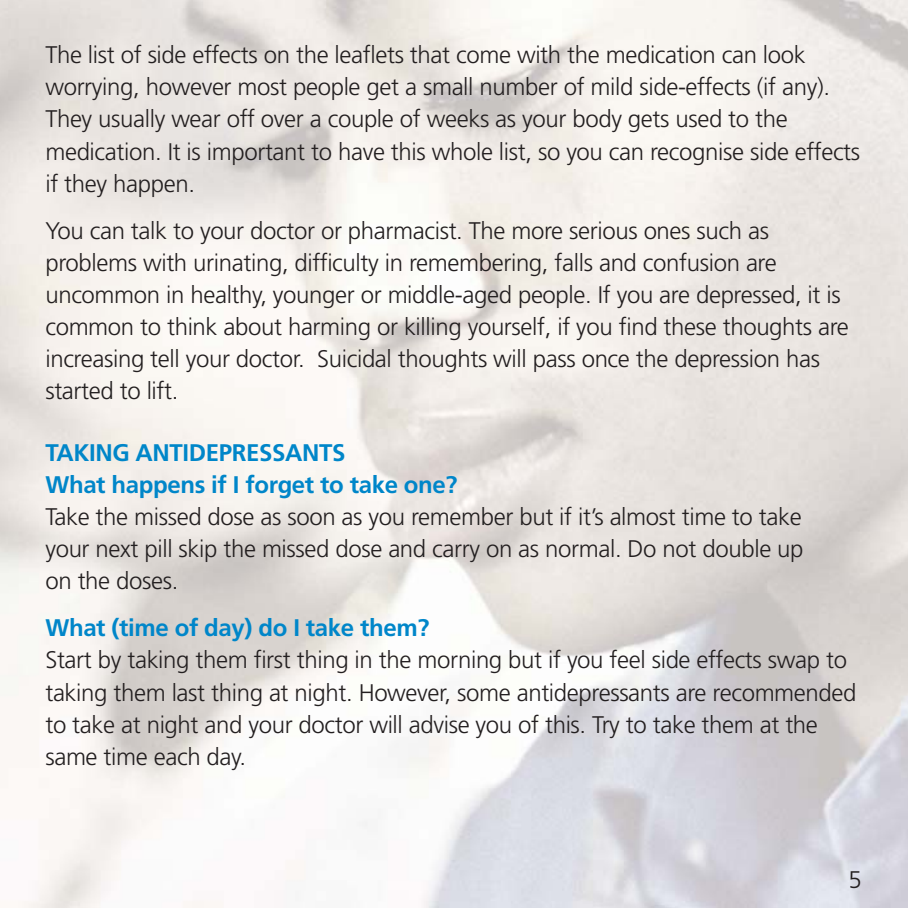
When someone has depression there is a reduction in the chemical activity in the brain. These chemicals transmit messages between nerve cells in the brain and play an important role in regulating our mood and emotions. The brain needs these chemicals to help us stay energised when life is stressful and to feel pleased when we achieve things. When this balance in our brain's chemistry is altered we lack energy and enthusiasm and fail to experience pleasure doing things we used to enjoy and lack our normal confidence. The role of antidepressants is to help restore the balance of these chemicals and increase our chances of getting 'back to normal'.

How quickly do they start working?

You might notice some benefits early on in the first 2 weeks such as better sleeping patterns, more energy and more interest in doing things. However, they work differently for different people. Some people don't notice any changes for two or three weeks. Generally you should expect to begin to feel better some time during this first month of taking the tablets.

What about side effects?

During the first couple of weeks of taking antidepressants, you may feel sick, suffer some headaches and feel more anxious. Some tablets can produce indigestion, but you can usually stop this by taking them with food. They may also interfere with your sexual function. There have been reports of episodes of agitation and/or aggression although these are rare.



The list of side effects on the leaflets that come with the medication can look worrying, however most people get a small number of mild side-effects (if any). They usually wear off over a couple of weeks as your body gets used to the medication. It is important to have this whole list, so you can recognise side effects if they happen.

You can talk to your doctor or pharmacist. The more serious ones such as problems with urinating, difficulty in remembering, falls and confusion are uncommon in healthy, younger or middle-aged people. If you are depressed, it is common to think about harming or killing yourself, if you find these thoughts are increasing tell your doctor. Suicidal thoughts will pass once the depression has started to lift.

TAKING ANTIDEPRESSANTS

What happens if I forget to take one?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember but if it's almost time to take your next pill skip the missed dose and carry on as normal. Do not double up on the doses.

What (time of day) do I take them?

Start by taking them first thing in the morning but if you feel side effects swap to taking them last thing at night. However, some antidepressants are recommended to take at night and your doctor will advise you of this. Try to take them at the same time each day.



Will I have to increase the dose?

This changes from person to person. If your dose needs adjusting you should speak to your GP to find out what works best for you.

How long do I need to take them for?

To gain the full benefit of antidepressants you need to take them for at least 6 months and for a while after you have recovered. Most courses last about eighteen months. You will probably start feeling better after a few weeks but it's important to continue the course – stopping early can put you back to square one. There are guidelines that your doctor will follow so always ask about the length of treatment you may need.

How often will I need to see the doctor?

After your first prescription it is recommended that you return one week later to discuss how you are getting on and have monthly appointments to monitor progress. However, talk to your doctor to agree what suits you - if you do have any concerns or questions telephone or book an appointment at any time.

Will I be able to order repeat prescriptions?

This is possible but it is important to keep seeing your doctor too in order to monitor progress and discuss your recovery or any questions you might have.

Can I take herbal remedies with them?

Before taking any herbal remedies you need to talk to your pharmacist or doctor as some can interfere with antidepressants.

How much will they cost?

As an NHS patient the standard NHS prescription charge which you would pay for

any other prescribed medication will apply. It may be that a pre-payment certificate will work out cheaper. Ask your pharmacist.

CONCERNS ABOUT TAKING ANTI-DEPRESSANTS

Are they addictive?

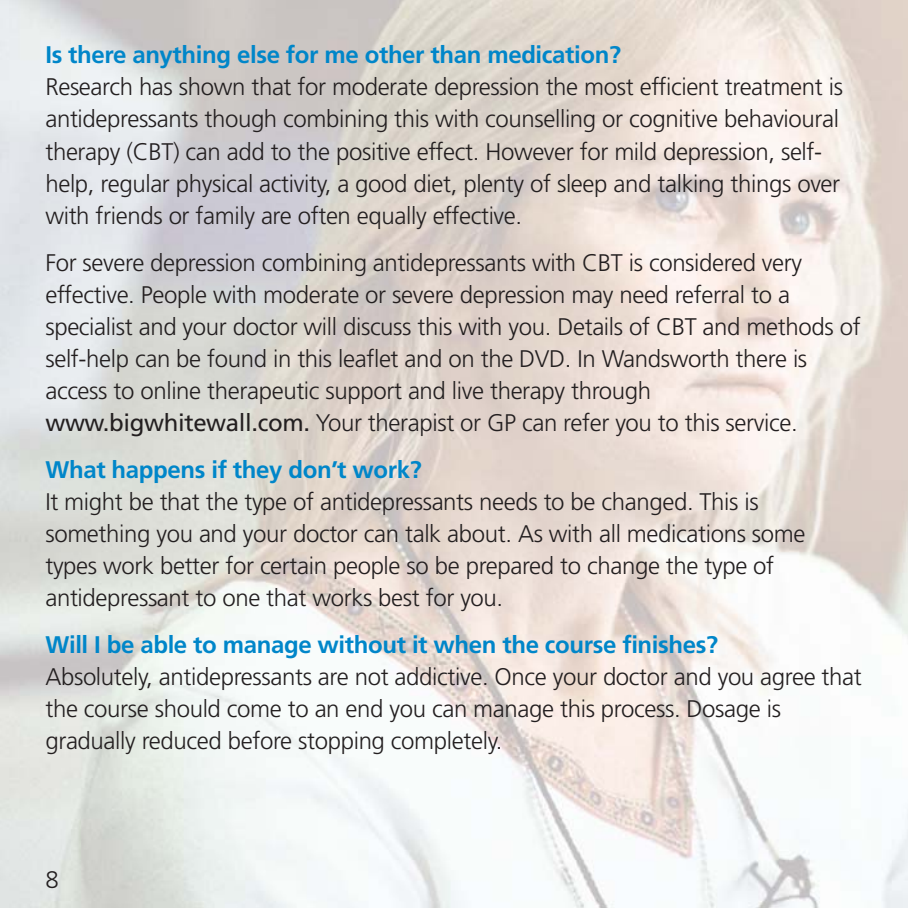
No – antidepressants are not addictive. As with all medication they need to be taken with care. Your doctor will review your medication regularly. Some people find that they experience ‘discontinuation’ effects if they stop taking their medication suddenly (e.g. anxiety, dizziness, nausea) Coming off the medication gradually with your doctor's help should prevent these side effects.

Is it OK to just take the medication when I am feeling down?

No- it is really important that you continue to take the medication for at least six months as prescribed. Stopping the medication early because you feel better is likely to cause you to revert back to how you were feeling when the depression originally developed.

Is it not just covering up things that need to be dealt with?

Antidepressants will give you a lift which will allow you to address some of the lifestyle changes you can make. Talking therapies alongside antidepressants have been shown to lead to the best recovery from depression. Details of talking therapies such as counselling can be found in this booklet and on the DVD. You will also find when you talk more openly about your condition that others who have suffered depression will talk to you. Peer support can be very helpful. Understanding your condition by reading good information really helps too and www.nhs.uk is an excellent place to look.



Is there anything else for me other than medication?

Research has shown that for moderate depression the most efficient treatment is antidepressants though combining this with counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can add to the positive effect. However for mild depression, self-help, regular physical activity, a good diet, plenty of sleep and talking things over with friends or family are often equally effective.

For severe depression combining antidepressants with CBT is considered very effective. People with moderate or severe depression may need referral to a specialist and your doctor will discuss this with you. Details of CBT and methods of self-help can be found in this leaflet and on the DVD. In Wandsworth there is access to online therapeutic support and live therapy through www.bigwhitewall.com. Your therapist or GP can refer you to this service.

What happens if they don't work?

It might be that the type of antidepressants needs to be changed. This is something you and your doctor can talk about. As with all medications some types work better for certain people so be prepared to change the type of antidepressant to one that works best for you.

Will I be able to manage without it when the course finishes?

Absolutely, antidepressants are not addictive. Once your doctor and you agree that the course should come to an end you can manage this process. Dosage is gradually reduced before stopping completely.

PRACTICAL LIFESTYLE QUERIES

Can I drink alcohol whilst taking them?

Drinking excess alcohol is not advised whilst taking antidepressants. Drinking in moderation is fine; the medication does not react badly with alcohol. As with any mood altering substance such as cannabis, excess alcohol will not help you but will delay your recovery from depression. However, some people find that alcohol has a depressant effect and in fact alcohol can sometime only be way of “covering up” the real feelings.

Will they make me sleepy?

They can make some people feel sleepy in the first few days of the course. If these feelings of sleepiness continue for a week or more, try taking the antidepressants last thing at night.

Can I drive?

You might feel drowsy or dizzy when first starting antidepressants. If you do feel this way, avoid driving for the first few days. The side effects normally pass after a few days.

Will they affect my sex life?

Libido can be reduced for some people and for a few people getting an erection or having an orgasm may become a problem. If this happens talk to your doctor as it might be worth trying a different type of antidepressant.

Will anyone know that I am taking medication? Will my pupils be dilated?

No – antidepressants will not cause you to have any external signs such as dilated pupils.

If I'm pregnant will it affect my unborn child?

There are antidepressants that can be taken whilst pregnant – it is important that you talk to your doctor before taking any medication.

Will antidepressants affect my employment or chances of a job?

It is up to you if you choose to tell your employer; there is no legal obligation. However, there are some jobs where you may operate machinery or drive a vehicle where it needs to be considered. If in doubt you can contact ACAS through www.acas.org.uk.

Making a declaration about your mental health gives your employer the opportunity to offer you support if required.

For more information you can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau or look on the GOV.UK website. www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/employment.

Will it affect my travel insurance?

Yes, as with any pre-existing illness it may affect your travel insurance. The mental health charity Mind has information on insurers who are better for people who are suffering from any sort of mental illness.

Will they make me put on weight?

Some anti-depressants can cause weight gain. If this is a concern for you then talk to your doctor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Should I return this DVD to the doctor?

No, once you have watched the DVD sufficient times to take in the information, please pass it on to friends, colleagues or dispose of it.

USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

NHS funded services

Psychological Therapies and Well being Service: offers individual or group psychological therapy sessions. Available through your doctor or self referral
Tel: 0203 513 6264.


Big White Wall: is an online mental wellbeing therapeutic support network available through a GP referral or by using your postcode on the website.
www.bigwhitewall.com.

Bereavement

Wandsworth Bereavement Service: offers a free and confidential service provided by volunteer counsellors extensively trained in bereavement counselling. Phone & make an appointment, if staff are busy the answer machine will be on, leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.
Tel 020 7223 3178 www.wandsworthbereavement.org.uk/index.html

Debt Problems

Wandsworth Money Advice Service: The Money Advice Service gives independent advice and information. Phone to make an appointment.
Tel: 0300 500 5000 www.moneyadvice.org.uk



Citizens Advice Bureaux: helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice.
Tel: 020 7042 0333 www.wandsworthcabx.org.uk

Disability and Social Care Advise Service (DASCAS): offers independent benefit and advocacy advice. Tel: 0208 7978 7306 www.dascas.org.uk

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or financial. It also includes harassment, stalking, honour based violence and forced marriage.

Wandsworth Safety Net: offers independent and confidential advocacy and support for all victims of domestic abuse. Tel: 020 7801 1777
Email: wandsworth.wsn@vslondon.org www.victimsupport.org.uk

One Stop Shop: offers information, legal advice and support for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The One Stop Shop runs from 10am to 12.30pm every Monday (except Bank Holidays) at Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, SW11 5TN. Tel: 07884 340117 (during opening hours). No appointment needed.

Refuge: Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.refuge.org.uk

In an Emergency Call 999

Healthy Lifestyle Services

There are free services to help you to feel healthier and make lasting changes. A Health Trainer can help you identify and develop your own health goals and chat to you about the local services available to you. The Health Trainers are trained to help increase confidence and motivation and they can work with you on:

Getting active

Cutting down on alcohol

Self development

Healthy eating

Quitting smoking

Socialising

For more information contact the Footsteps team Tel: 020 8871 5055

Email: footsteps@wandsworth.gov.uk

Physical Activity

Local borough Leisure Centres offer a number of exercise classes and activities.

There are crèche facilities available at certain times:

Balham Leisure Centre: 020 8772 9577

Latchmere Leisure Centre: 020 7207 8004

Putney Leisure Centre: 020 8785 0388

Tooting Leisure Centre: 020 8333 7555

Wandle Recreation Centre: 020 8871 1149

Swimming is available at Putney, Tooting, Balham and Latchmere Leisure Centres.

Outdoor swimming is available at Tooting Bec Lido Tel: 020 8871 7198.

Self-Help Books

Wandsworth Libraries offer free **Books on Prescription** scheme to help you manage your mental health. The books help you manage a number of mental illnesses such as:

Depression

Anger

Anxiety

Stress

Self Management Course

Wandsworth Self Management programmes: offers information about activities and opportunities for people living with long term health conditions such as depression. Tel: 020 8871 5163 or email: expertpatients@wandsworthccg.nhs.uk to book onto a course.

Local community and voluntary sector mental health support in the

There are a number of local organisations that facilitate self help groups and provide support in Wandsworth. For more information see:

Care4Me: www.care4me.org.uk

Adult Care Information Service: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/acis

USEFUL NATIONAL CONTACTS

Mental Health Helplines

NHS Direct: can provide you with medical advice at any time of the day or night (24 hour) Tel: 0845 4647

Samaritans: provide 24 hour emotional support (24 hour) Tel: 0208 789 9121

Sane: can provide information and crisis support.

Saneline operates between 1pm to 11pm every day (Mon-Sun: 1pm – 11pm)
Tel: 0845 767 8000

Refuge/Respite

Maytree Respite Care Centre: is a registered charity supporting people in suicidal crisis in a non-medical setting. Tel: 020 2763 7070 or
Email: maytree@maytree.org.uk

Websites

www.mind.org.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.swlstg-tr.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk/conditions/depression/pages/introduction.aspx

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.samaritans.org.uk

www.moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome

Depression UK: National self-help organisation that helps people manage their depression. www.depressionuk.org/index.shtml

Depression Alliance: National website to help people with depression.
Tel: 0845 123 2320 www.depressionalliance.org

London based non-NHS psychotherapy and counselling services

(Low fees charged, according to circumstances and some to no cost).

Balham Community Counselling Service: Counselling for people who cannot afford private help. Tel: 0208 673 4422

Equilibrium Counselling & Therapy Centre: Counselling, acupuncture, hypnotherapy, osteopathy, couples therapy. Tel: 020 8870 8761

Inner City Centre: psychotherapy and counselling. Tel 020 7247 1589

Kingston Women's Centre: individual counselling, sexual abuse survivor's course. Tel: 020 8541 1964/41

British Psychotherapy Foundation: psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Tel. 020 8452 9823

PACE Counselling Service: Counselling service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people. Tel: 020 7700 1323

Women and Girls Network: Counselling and information service for any women or girls who have experienced any form of violence; physical, sexual or emotional. Tel: 020 7610 4678

In an emergency, contact Accident and Emergency department and ask to see the duty psychiatrist.