

CHRONIC DISEASE AND DEPRESSION



A chronic illness is an illness that cannot be completely cured. However, a chronic illness can often be managed. A special diet, exercise and certain medicines can help a lot.

Some people can have more than one chronic illness. Do not lose hope! With lifestyle changes and treatment, many people with chronic illness will improve over time.

Depression is common among the chronically ill:

People who have a chronic illness have to learn to live with the illness itself. They have to follow the treatments given for their illness. The illness can affect a person's freedom and their ability to get around. The illness can change the way a person lives, sees him or herself or how they relate to others. For these reasons, a certain amount of sadness is normal. In many cases, the stress in dealing with so much change catches up with the person and he ends up feeling depressed.

Depression Interferes with Recovery:

Depression can make a chronic illness worse. Depression can increase the physical pain. It makes you tired and adds to the loss of energy that may be a part of the illness. Depression tends to make people less active. Depression takes away a person's motivation. This is very serious because the patient needs motivation in order to follow the doctor's treatment. Treatment can involve specific medicines, exercise and diets.

Symptoms of Depression:

- Ongoing sad, anxious or "empty" mood;
- Feelings of hopelessness or uselessness;
- Feelings of guilt or helplessness;
- No interest or pleasure in regular hobbies or activities;
- Reduced energy, feeling tired;
- No focus, trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions;
- Not sleeping through the night, waking up too early in the morning or sleeping too much;
- Appetite and/or weight changes;
- Thinking of death or suicide;
- Being irritable or losing your temper.

What can you do if you have a chronic illness?

Learn the symptoms of depression. Talk to your doctor if you think you are depressed. See what kinds of treatment options are available. You may also want to join a support group. Depending on where you live, there are support groups in nearly every community in North America.

For more information, call us at: 1-855-959-7340 or visit our website at www.ICHPColorado.com and check out **In the Spotlight...**