

Major Depressive Disorder: Single or Recurrent Episode

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PSY8636

This condition exists when your symptoms last two weeks or more. Of people over age 18, about 6% have this disorder at least once in their lives. Most of these are women, since the prevalence of the Major Depressive Disorder is 7% for them, as opposed to only 3% of men. About 2% of people have this disorder last for at least one month. The duration of an untreated major depression is usually 6-9 months, with a 50% chance that it will recur. Having this disorder can be debilitating. You feel “blue” most of the time, your energy level is very low, you may cry uncontrollably, your interest in what would be normally pleasurable for you is low, and you find yourself being easily irritated and distracted. You tend to “take it out on” other people. You may have thoughts of death, suicide, and what life is all about. You may not feel like eating normally, and you can have trouble falling asleep at night. You may be experiencing significant depression for the first time (single episode), or you may have the condition several times (recurrent episode). Major depression is a serious condition, and it usually requires both psychotherapy and medical attention.

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