



As we grow older, we face significant life changes that can increase our risk for depression.

Causes of Depression in Older Adults & the Elderly

Health Problems – Illness and disability; chronic or severe pain; cognitive decline; damage to body image due to surgery or disease.

Chronic Diseases – Parkinson’s disease; Alzheimer’s disease; stroke; heart disease; cancer; diabetes; lupus; multiple sclerosis; thyroid disorders; vitamin B12 deficiency; dementia, and side effects from treatment medications.

Loneliness & Isolation – Living alone; dwindling social circle due to deaths or relocation; decreased mobility due to illness; loss of driving privileges, and isolation due to hearing loss and visual deficits.

Reduced Sense of Purpose – Feelings of purposelessness or loss of identity due to retirement or physical limitations on activities.

Fears – Fear of death or dying; anxiety over financial problems or health issues.

Recent Bereavements – Death of spouse, other family members, friends, and pets.

Source: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-in-older-adults.htm>

Signs & Symptoms of Depression in Older Adults & the Elderly

Sadness or despair that persists for 2 or more weeks	Fatigue
Feelings of hopelessness or expressing helplessness	Sleep disturbances (difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, oversleeping, or daytime sleepiness)
Abandoning or losing interest in hobbies or other pleasurable pastimes	Neglecting personal care (skipping meals, forgetting meds, neglecting personal hygiene)
Loss of self-worth (worries about being a burden, feelings of worthlessness, self-loathing)	Social withdrawal and isolation (reluctance to be with friends, engage in activities, or leave home)
Increased use of alcohol or other drugs	Weight loss or loss of appetite
Memory or concentration problems	Lack of motivation and energy
Unexplained or aggravated aches and pains	Excessive anxiety and worries
Slowed movement and speech	Fixation on death or suicidal thoughts or attempts
Irritability or restlessness	

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