

Feeling Down

This influenza pandemic is disrupting people's daily lives and forcing them to confront various disturbing situations, such as overwork, hospitalization, and material and human losses. These disruptions can cause sadness and anger, leaving you in a state of mild depression. Although you can't prevent such emotions from arising, you can preserve your well-being or help a loved one in a difficult situation to do so.

What Is Mild Depression?

Mild depression is a temporary state of fatigue, discouragement, and sadness. It is essentially caused by sadness and anger. These two emotions can appear in various forms; they are easier to detect when they emerge as discouragement or upset, but are more subtle when they cause isolation and fatigue.

Mild depression is a common experience, and can stem from difficulties ranging from a seemingly banal sense of boredom to a perfectly understandable source of disruption such as a death in the family.

Mild depression can appear in different guises at both the physical and psychological levels, and varies in intensity from one person to the next. People's ability to face situations and events differs based on their personality, life experiences, beliefs and values, support networks, etc.



Signs of Mild Depression

A mildly depressed person may:

- have a negative view of things or daily events;
- feel disappointed, discouraged, insecure or sad;
- feel rage or hostility;
- lack energy;
- have difficulty making decisions;
- have fits of weeping or become withdrawn;
- experience changes in sleep habits, appetite, etc.

Radical changes of attitudes or behaviour may take place:

- An easygoing person may become aggressive.
- A person in good health may show various physical symptoms.
- A person may regress; for example, a child may start to wet the bed again.

A state of mild depression should be cared for. There are ways for you to emerge from it and gradually recover your spirit and energy.

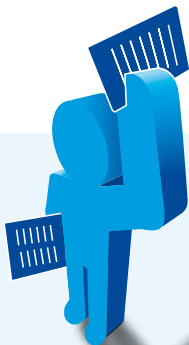
Take care of yourself.

Ways to Improve the Situation

Here are some ways to deal with your dejection. There are many solutions, including several that are easy to apply:

Get Informed

- Consult reliable sources of information on influenza, such as the relevant authorities or well-informed people.
- Limit your intake of negative information as much as possible: try to change your way of looking at events, and tell the positive from the negative.
- Consult the Government of Québec pandemic website: www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca
- Get information on the support services available in your community.
- Get information on support services available in your workplace, if applicable.



Get Organized

- Set limits. For example, learn to say no to tasks you don't want to do and that aren't essential.
- Reduce the burden of your daily tasks as much as possible. For example, sweep twice a week rather than every day.
- Learn to delegate: ask your children to set the table, for example.
- Identify one or more people you can count on when you need them to take care of the children or a dependent person.



Take Care of Yourself

- Pay attention to your feelings, emotions, and reactions, and give yourself permission to express them to someone you trust or to express them by writing, reading, or exercising.
- Practise a physical activity that lets you release stress and get rid of tension.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle, with a proper diet and enough sleep.
- Limit factors that cause you stress.
- Allow yourself little pleasures: listen to music, dance, have a nice mug of warm milk.
- Stay in touch with people whose company you enjoy.
- Remember strategies you've used in the past to get through difficult times.
- Count on your personal strengths.



Things Are Getting Better When...

- You start to gradually return to your daily activities.
- You start to believe in your strengths.
- Your mood is improving.
- You start to smile and enjoy yourself again.
- You are eating and sleeping better.
- You set goals and objectives for yourself.
- You feel like communicating with others again.

When to Seek Help

Mild depression can usually be overcome. However, after a certain length of time (weeks or months) the malaise can still be there or be getting worse, even if you've taken steps to improve the situation. Your condition may be getting worse if you are showing these signs, among others:

- Anxiety, fatigue
- Irritability, impatience
- Lack of energy
- Lack of pleasure and interest
- Negative thoughts and words
- Intense fits of weeping without apparent cause
- Sleep or appetite problems
- Difficulty carrying out daily tasks

At this stage, it's important that you ask for help from a health and social services professional or from someone else you trust.

