

Persistent Depressive Disorder

Persistent depressive disorder is a milder but chronic pattern of depression. People with this disorder experience depressed mood for most of the day, more days than not, for at least two years. (In children and adolescents, mood can be irritable instead of depressed and the duration must be for at least one year.) While depressed, these individuals have two or more of the following symptoms:

- Poor appetite or overeating
- Too little or too much sleep
- Low energy or fatigue
- Low self-esteem
- Poor concentration or difficulty making decisions
- Feelings of hopelessness

Persons with persistent depressive disorder may have occasional periods when they do not feel depressed or have any of the symptoms listed above, but these symptom-free periods never last more than two months.

Although persistent depressive disorder is not as severe as major depressive disorder, it often impacts how people feel about themselves and their future and can interfere with their relationships, work, and other everyday activities. Therefore, it is important for individuals who believe they may have persistent depressive disorder to talk with their family physician or a mental health professional. Treatment may include medication and/or psychotherapy. Support groups can also be helpful.