
Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients
and their
families need to
know before
hospitalization
or a nursing
home admission*

Depression

Depression is a medical condition. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, concentrate, eat, sleep, and enjoy life. Many older adults with depression need treatment to feel better.

Why Is It Important? Depression is a medical condition that causes suffering for patients and their families. Depression is often hidden behind physical problems. Depression can be treated but must be discovered first. It is important to make sure older adults have access to the right resources.

What You Can Do:

- If you think you or your loved one has depression, speak to your doctor or nurse. Ask for help.
- Understand that depression is a medical condition, and that the person with depression will not “snap out of it”.
- Ask questions about treatment options. There are different types of treatments available for depression including psychotherapy (talk therapy) and medication.
- Older adults with depression are at risk for suicide. If you have thoughts of harming yourself or if you are concerned your loved one is suicidal, tell someone, or call 911. Seek help.
- If you suffer with depression or have sad feelings or mood, try to do the things you enjoyed doing before . Visit with friends and family, for example. Studies have shown that doing things even when you don't think you will enjoy them can improve mood.