



GOOD HEALTH

P A T I E N T N E W S L E T T E R

DEPRESSION

Depression is a disease that is very common in kidney patients. There is no reason to feel ashamed. Your life changes when you go on dialysis, and it can be overwhelming. It is a lot to manage in a short amount of time. COVID-19 has impacted life in many ways, and this is another stressor for dialysis patients. Knowing the signs of depression and ways to improve it may help you feel better. People sometimes mistake sadness for being depressed, but they are not the same. Sadness, sometimes called the blues, is a normal feeling that does not last long and often happens because of a certain event. On the other hand, depression lasts longer, sometimes for weeks or months at a time, and it can have an impact on your daily activities.



SIGNS OF DEPRESSION:

- Feeling hopeless or that nothing is ever going to get better
- No interest in the things you used to enjoy, (i.e., hanging out with friends, playing sports or other hobbies)
- Eating more or not eating as much as you have in the past
- Sleeping too much or not being able to sleep
- Feeling stressed, angry, or everything and everyone gets on your nerves
- Feeling tired or drained
- Physical pain



WHAT DOES MEDICARE COVER?

Medicare Part B helps cover outpatient mental health visits with the following providers if they accept Medicare. You are still required to pay what Medicare does not pay. Medicare will also pay for telehealth visits with some providers during COVID-19.

- Psychiatrist or another doctor
- Clinical psychologist
- Clinical social worker
- Clinical nurse specialist
- Nurse practitioner
- Physician assistant



TREATMENT



There are several options to treat depression including different types of therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or psychotherapy. Medication or a combination of therapies and medication can also treat depression. Therapeutic services can be provided by a licensed counselor, social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist, but only a psychiatrist or other doctor can prescribe medication to treat depression.

Some of the services that Medicare covers include:

- One depression screening per year. The screening must be done in a primary care doctor's office or primary care clinic that can provide follow-up treatment and referrals.
- Individual and group therapy with doctors or other licensed professionals.

Some of the services that Medicare covers, cont'd.

- Family counseling, if the main purpose is to help with your treatment.
- Psychiatric evaluation.
- Medication management.
- A yearly "Wellness" visit. Medicare covers a yearly "Wellness" visit once every 12 months (if you have had Part B for longer than 12 months). This is a good time to talk to your doctor or other health care provider about changes in your mental health so they can evaluate your changes year to year.

For more information about Medicare coverage for mental health, please visit: <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10184-Medicare-and-Your-Mental-Health-Benefits.pdf>.



TELEHEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH

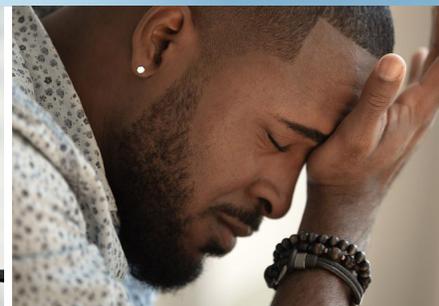
Medicare will pay for different types of visits that can be done from home during COVID-19:

1. **Telehealth visits:** a visit with a provider using a telecommunication system, such as Zoom or Skype
2. **Virtual check-ins:** a brief check-in (usually 10-15 minutes) with a provider to determine if other services are needed
3. **E-visits:** a visit with a provider through an online patient portal



If you are experiencing signs of depression or other mental health concerns, please seek help.

- Reach out to your primary care doctor.
- Contact the Crisis Text Line by texting "HOME" to 741741 on your cell phone. You will be connected to a volunteer and receive text support regarding your concerns.
- Call the SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline at 1-877-726-4727 for information about mental health and to locate treatment near you.
- If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). They also have a live, online chat feature that can be accessed on their website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

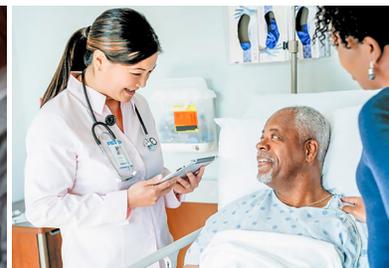
American Kidney Fund: Coping with Stress and Anxiety
<https://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-today/coping-with-stress-and-anxiety-during-the-coronavirus.html>

SAMHSA: Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

NKF Patients Helping Patients
<https://www.kidney.org/newsletter/dialysis-depression-%E2%80%93-patients-helping-patients>

National Alliance on Mental Illness: Resource Guide
<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2020/COVID-19-and-Mental-Illness-NAMI-Releases-Important/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf?lang=en-US>

Dialysis Patient Depression Toolkit
<https://esrdnetworks.org/toolkits/patient-toolkits/new-toolkit-dialysis-patient-depression-toolkit>



To file a grievance, please contact Network 8 by phone at 1-877-936-9260, by email at nw8info@allianthealth.org, or by mail at 775 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite 310, Ridgeland, MS 39157.

Visit www.esrdnetwork8.org for more information.
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