



IS YOUR MOOD A PROBLEM?

Here are some signs to look out for:

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feeling irritable or moody
- Feeling inadequate
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Anxiety
- Loss of energy or motivation
- Feeling negative about your life
- Loss of sex drive
- Not liking yourself, feeling ugly
- Disturbed sleep
- Feeling unable to enjoy things that you used to like doing
- Poor concentration
- Feeling guilty or bad
- Frequent minor health problems, such as headaches or stomachaches
- Feeling agitated
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time

If you recognise some of these signs and have felt like this for more than two weeks, please speak to your GP and contact one of the organisations listed on this factsheet

WHO CAN HELP?

Depression Alliance Scotland

Help and support for people experiencing depression and low mood.

Tel: 0845 123 23 20

www.lookokfeelcrap.org

Website: www.dascot.org

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

Information, help and support for people with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Advice Line: 0845 0776000

Website: www.chss.org.uk

British Heart Foundation Scotland

Information, help and support for people with heart conditions.

Heart Helpline: 0300 330 3311

Website: www.bhf.org.uk

Samaritans

Confidential, emotional support 24/7 to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings

Helpline: 08457 909090 24 hours

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

Breathing Space

A free confidential helpline to call when feeling down or stressed

Helpline: 0800 83 85 87

Website: www.breathingspace.co.uk

Stresswatch Scotland

Supports recovery from stress, anxiety and related conditions

Helpline: 01563 574 144

Email: info@stresswatchscotland.org

Website: www.stresswatchscotland.org

Living Life to the Full

A free online life skills course developed in Scotland based on cognitive behaviour therapy

Website: www.livinglifetothefull.com

Living Better is a project led by the Royal College of General Practitioners (Scotland), in partnership with the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health and the University of Stirling. Other partners in the project include British Heart Foundation (Scotland), Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland, Depression Alliance Scotland and Diabetes UK Scotland, and funded by the Scottish Government.

We would like to know if you have found this leaflet useful or not useful. Please contact the Living Better Project at:

Living Better Project, Royal College of General Practitioners (Scotland), FREEPOST SCO6512, Edinburgh EH2 1JX

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HEART DISEASE & MOOD

Do you have heart disease?
How are you feeling in yourself?
It's alright to feel down!

Many people who have heart disease find that they experience low mood, depression and anxiety. Research has found that one in five people with heart disease are likely to experience depression and anxiety. Considerably more than in the general population.

There are many reasons why this may be but whatever the cause, if you have heart disease and are finding your mood is affected, you don't have to feel like this; there are things you can do to feel better.

Unfortunately many people don't seek help because they don't recognise the symptoms and don't realise that this is what is going on. Many people don't want to speak about how they feel because they are scared of being labelled mentally ill.



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Living Better

Improving mental health and wellbeing of people with long term conditions
More information on the project can be found at: www.livingbetter-scotland.org.uk



HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY LOW MOOD?

Why do I feel low?

- When you are diagnosed with heart disease it is common to experience powerful emotions.
- It can be frustrating learning to live with a longer term health condition particularly if you've not had any health concerns before.
- You may feel fed up with the changes to your lifestyle and having to visit your clinic and GP regularly.
- You may feel isolated from your friends and family and feel like you can't take part in activities you used to share as easily as before.

How does my mood affect my heart disease?

- Many people with low mood feel they can't be bothered to do things they really need to do. This inactivity can make you feel even lower or more stressed leading to a vicious cycle.
- Feeling low can affect your motivation to address any lifestyle issues that may be contributing to health.
- Feeling low may cause you to not take important medication that has been prescribed for you.
- Feeling low can encourage you to turn to more harmful behaviour such as over eating, smoking and drinking alcohol for comfort and stress relief.

Talk about it

When you feel low or anxious, it can be difficult to tell someone else how you feel. You may feel that people don't want to listen to you being miserable. However talking about how you feel to your friends, family, doctor or practice nurse is an important step on the road to recovery. You could also call a helpline; we've listed some in the Who Can Help? section in this leaflet.

Your GP

One way to get help is to speak to your GP. Building up a good relationship with your GP can be a real help in getting better. If you feel that it is difficult to speak to him or her, it may be worth finding out if there is another GP in your practice who knows more about depression or who is easier to talk to. It is perfectly acceptable to make an appointment to see a different GP in the same practice.

Antidepressants

Antidepressant drugs work by increasing the levels of certain chemicals in the brain. There are many different types of

antidepressants and different people will respond to different drugs. Some antidepressants, in particular older drugs, can cause weight gain and so it's important to keep an eye on your weight and speak to your GP if you have any concerns or side effects.

Talking Therapies

There are different talking therapies available, including cognitive behavioural therapy, psychotherapy and counselling. These can help you explore why you feel like you do and how to change it. You can get therapy through the NHS, voluntary organisations or privately.

Support Groups

Self-help support groups enable you to meet others who feel like you do. This can help you feel less alone. Depression Alliance Scotland runs groups for people who feel low; you don't need a diagnosis of depression. Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) heart groups offer people living with heart disease a chance to meet and share experiences with others. This includes emotional support as many other people at the group will have also experienced low mood or stress.

Increase physical activity

Exercise, especially structured physical activity, has been found to alleviate depression. You will have to speak to your GP before starting a programme of exercise. Many CHSS heart groups have an exercise element.

Learning to control anxiety can help

It is very good to learn to relax so that you can call on this feeling when you get anxious. Things you can do to help yourself relax include exercise, meeting friends, learning a relaxation technique, reading a good book, playing with your pets, having a long bath, whatever helps you switch off. Learning breathing control will help you cope if you feel anxious or panicky. You can download free anxiety control training modules from Living Life to the Full, a free online life skills course.

Alternative therapies

Therapies like acupuncture, tai chi, reflexology and yoga can help some people relax and feel better about themselves.

Food

Eating a healthy balanced diet can help lift your mood. Factsheets about eating healthily and food and mood are available from organisations listed.

