
Connection Of Lupus And Depression

I used to think that winter was the most depressing time of the year. I hated to see the leaves fall off the trees. I couldn't wait for spring when the flowers started blooming again.

Now that I have experienced true depression, I know the difference. There is a form of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtml>) but what I felt was never that serious. I was just wanted to get through the winter and get back to planting my garden.

Symptoms of clinical depression can include:

- A prolonged feeling of sadness or hopelessness
- Losing interest in the things you used to enjoy
- Either sleeping too much or not being able to sleep
- Total lack of energy
- Either weight loss or weight gain
- Feeling that you are worthless
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Suicidal thoughts

Causes of depression

Although scientists haven't figured out exactly what causes depression, there are some common factors. These include a chemical imbalance in the brain, a change in hormones or having a family history of depression.

Some traits that increase your risk for depression

- Gender plays a big role, as depression affects more women than men
- Stressful events such as the death of a loved one or financial difficulties
- A history of bipolar disorders or alcoholism, or other mental health diseases like anxiety, bulimia, anorexia, and post-traumatic stress disorder (<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd>)
- Abuse of recreational drugs or alcohol
- Chronic illness, cancer, or stroke

There are many treatments available

Depression is treatable. In fact, there are so many options that it may take some trial and error to find the one that works for you. And it may take a combination of things. There are numerous prescription medications available for depression, but you may need to also talk to a mental health professional. (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/types-mental-health-professionals>)

I have fought this beast for over a year now, but I can truly say that things are getting better.

Mine started with bronchitis and an abscessed tooth. All of this, on top of lupus, fibromyalgia and other things that I deal with every day, was just too much. It started with feeling like I was never going to get any better. I felt like I was surrounded by a gray fog that clouded everything I tried to do. A simple thing like cooking a meal became a major ordeal. I couldn't even make a decision about what to eat.

Finally one day, I trusted my doctor enough to tell her what was going on in my head. She was very matter of fact about it. No big drama or telling me that I just needed to think happy thoughts. She laid out all of my options and together we came up with a plan. I tried three prescriptions before I finally found one that worked for me.

The difference between my life now and a year ago is like night and day. The gray fog that seemed to surround me has lifted. Its easier to get out of bed and face the day. I'm looking forward to things that I enjoy again, like cooking and planting flowers.

I wish now that I had talked to my doctor sooner. There's such a stigma around depression and other mental illnesses that many people won't admit they have a problem. But it is no different than lupus. It's just another disease that my body has developed. And it's just as treatable. I don't mind having another pill to take at bedtime because the results are amazing. It has given me the ability to enjoy my life again.