Patients with Huntington’s Disease are at high risk for depression, impulsivity, and suicidality. Unfortunately, psychiatric problems like depression and suicidal thoughts are part of the illness and should be aggressively treated by your doctor.

Depression Overview

Depression is a medical condition that can cause a wide variety of psychological and physical symptoms. Extreme sadness is usually the most common symptom. Depression can be distinguished from occasional blues and grief because depression is persistent, and it interferes with daily functioning and relationships.

Very importantly, depression is a treatable condition. Psychotherapy, counseling, drug therapy, and other treatments can alleviate symptoms and help depressed individuals feel better and return to functioning. Treatment is most successful in people who are willing to be helped.

Major depression is the medical term for depression that includes five of the symptoms listed below.

- Sadness most of the day, particularly in the morning
- Markedly diminished pleasure or loss of interest in almost all activities nearly every day
- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Insomnia or excessive sleep
- Agitated movements or very slow movement
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Impaired concentration and indecisiveness
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
**Suicide**

Suicide is a tragic and preventable consequence of severe depression. If your doctor suspects that you are depressed, he or she will often ask about suicidal thoughts. It is absolutely imperative to tell your clinician if you have thoughts about harming yourself or ending your life. If you are concerned that you or someone you know is at risk of hurting him or herself or others, you should do one of the following:

- Call a healthcare provider for advice or an urgent appointment
- Take the person to the local emergency department
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline ([www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

**Useful Websites:**

International Foundation for Research and Education of Depression ([www.ifred.org](http://www.ifred.org))

Mental Health America ([www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org))

National Alliance on Mental Illness ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org))

**References:**

