

Overcoming Depression

Day by Day

- Your doctor has recognised that you are suffering from depression and has started a course of treatment with a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) to help you feel better.
- You will probably need to see your doctor within a month, so they can see how you're doing.
- Keep this diary handy, to help you get through the next vital three weeks.
- The diary gives you daily facts and advice about depression, with a reminder to carry on taking your medicine as instructed. At the end of each day, tear out the page to keep a record of your progress.

Should you need to contact your doctor, the address and telephone number of the surgery are given below:

The name of your medicine is _____
Your next appointment is on _____

Remember, follow your doctor's advice and take your medicine every day. Tackle your depression one day at a time.

DAY 1

Depression is a temporary and a treatable condition.

Your doctor has prescribed an antidepressant to help you overcome your symptoms and get back to normal.

Seeking help from your doctor was the first and most important step on the road to recovery.

DAY 2

Did you know?

Depression is a real medical illness that has nothing to do with personal failings or being a social misfit.

About your treatment

Take your dose at approximately the same time every day. Swallow it whole with a glass of water.

Keep going!

Don't be ashamed about taking antidepressants - depression is a real illness like any other.

When you have taken your antidepressant tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 3

Did you know?

Depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain, which can be corrected by antidepressant medicines.

About your treatment

Don't expect immediate improvement with your treatment it takes time for your brain chemistry to return to normal.

Keep going!

Take things one day at a time. Take your capsule/tablet today.

When you have taken your antidepressant tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 4

Did you know?

Depression often requires professional help, because it causes troublesome symptoms and can go on for a long time if untreated.

About your treatment.

Your capsule/tablets start working straight away, but you may not notice an improvement for a few weeks.

Keep going!

Be patient. It has taken time for you to become unwell, so your full recovery will take time.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 5

Did you know?

You are not alone - depression affects as many as 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men in the UK.

About your treatment.

Don't stop taking your treatment without telling your doctor, who can help with any problems or queries you may have.

Keep going!

No matter how bad you are feeling now, you should feel better in a few weeks.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 6

Did you know?

5% of the population suffer major depression at any one time, and 5% have milder forms of the illness.

About your treatment.

Your capsules/tablets shouldn't lose their antidepressant effect as you carry on taking them.

Keep going!

The success of treatment is up to you - don't give up your treatment now.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 7

Did you know?

Depression is an illness - it is not the same as feeling sad or being a bit low in your spirits.

About your treatment.

Antidepressants don't alter your personality and are a treatment for your illness.

Keep going!

Well done, you've made it through 1 week. Carry on.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 8

Did you know?

It is quite normal to feel very tearful and to lose interest in daily activities when depressed, but these symptoms can be helped with treatment.

About your treatment

Antidepressants are not the same as tranquillisers or sleeping pills.

Keep going!

Don't be afraid to admit to others that you have depression, you are ill like any other patient and need treatment.

When you have taken your capsules/tablets today, tear out this page.

DAY 9

Did you know?

Most people with depression experience negative feelings of guilt, worthlessness and pessimism and have a low opinion of themselves.

About your treatment

Antidepressants are not addictive or habit-forming.

Keep going!

Don't hesitate to phone your doctor if you need him or her to answer any questions about your medicine or your symptoms.

When you have taken your capsules/tablets today, tear out this page.

DAY 10

Did you know?

Disturbed sleep is one of the most common problems in depression, and one of the first to improve with therapy.

About your treatment

Your capsules/tablets shouldn't affect your ability to drive or to concentrate. However, do not drive or use machinery unless you are sure that you are not affected.

Keep going!

Your next appointment is now 10 days closer. Keep up the good work.

When you have taken your complete tablet today, tear out this page.

DAY 11

Did you know?

Anxiety and nervousness are often troublesome in depression, but they usually respond well to treatment in a few weeks.

About your treatment

Most people do not find their ability to carry out normal daily activities is affected by their treatment.

Keep going!

If you need to see your doctor earlier than your booked appointment, do so. They are there to help you.

When you have taken your complete tablet today, tear out this page.

DAY 12

Depression is not a normal aspect of ageing, although it is quite common in later years.

Your capsules/tablets are unlikely to make you feel drowsy during the day.

Don't give up now - it may take a little longer to feel better, but it's well worth it in the end.

DAY 13

Depression happens to people from all walks of life, even powerful figures such as Winston Churchill or creative geniuses like Vincent Van Gogh.

Antidepressants don't affect the mood of people who are not suffering from depression.

Don't worry if you are still feeling bad, you remain on the road to recovery as long as you carry on with your medicine.

DAY 14

Did you know?

People with depression may go to their doctor with seemingly unrelated complaints such as backache or recurring headaches.

About your treatment

It is important to follow your doctor's advice every day, and to ask any questions if you are unsure about anything.

Keep going!

You've made real progress by persevering for 2 weeks.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 15

Did you know?

Symptoms of depression are often worse in the morning and improve during the day, so don't worry if this happens to you.

About your treatment

Take your capsule/tablet every day, as instructed by your doctor, to give yourself the best chance of recovery.

Keep going!

Everyone has good and bad days in depression, that's just the way the illness is. Stay with it.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 16

Did you know?

Major life events such as bereavement, alcohol problems or childbirth, can trigger depression without necessarily being a direct cause of the illness.

About your treatment

It is very important to carry on taking your capsules/tablets for a few months, even if you feel a bit better, to make sure your symptoms don't return.

Keep going!

You may feel hopeless at times, but help is at hand. Contact your doctor as soon as you need to.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 17

The more severe the illness, the more likely that antidepressants will help.

About your treatment

If you miss a dose don't worry. See the leaflet which was enclosed with your medicine and follow the instructions.

Keep going!

Set yourself realistic goals, don't expect too much of yourself at this stage of your illness.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 18

Did you know?

The vast majority of people feel better within a few weeks of antidepressant treatment and get back to normal in a few months.

About your treatment

If you accidentally forget your medication, don't panic, you won't affect your recovery or go back to square 1.

Keep going!

There's no turning back now, you'll be seeing your doctor soon.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 19

Did you know?

Even such diverse symptoms as loss of concentration and poor memory can be due to depression.

About your treatment

You shouldn't have any serious problems with side effects, but if you do feel unwell or are worried about your capsules/tablets, talk to your doctor.

Keep going!

Talk to your family and friends - their support can help you to win through.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet for today, tear out this page.

DAY 20

Did you know?

Having a bad day does not mean the illness is getting worse, but is quite normal in the course of depression.

About your treatment

Any side effects of treatment are usually nothing to worry about and go away after the first few weeks.

Keep going!

Ask your doctor about depression support groups you can contact.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet today, tear out this page.

DAY 21

Did you know?

Nowadays, antidepressants are very effective and have few side effects, which are usually mild and temporary.

About your treatment

Remember to take your capsules/tablets with you if you go away for a period of time, so you don't have a break in your treatment.

Keep going!

However you're feeling now, you've completed the vital first 3 weeks of your recovery.

Just before you see your doctor again, try to complete the questionnaire on the back page.

When you have taken your capsule/tablet today, tear out this page.

How are you Doing?

Before your next appointment, you may like to fill in this list of questions to help your doctor see how you've progressed. Remember, it may still be too early for you to see any real improvement yet, so don't lose heart.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Have you taken your capsule every day? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you feel more cheerful than before? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you less tearful than before? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you sleeping better at night? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you find it easier to concentrate? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your appetite improved? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can you enjoy activities such as TV/radio or reading a book? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you getting out socially? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

As a reminder, note down any questions you may have for your doctor:
