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## More than unhappy: Depression affects your ability to think

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**Abstract:** *Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. You may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities and sometimes you may feel as if life isn't worth living. Depression may require long-term treatment. Most people with depression feel better with medication, psychotherapy or both. A person's ability to maintain good mental health is down to a range of factors, which are often beyond their control. The determinants of mental health include social, environmental, psychological, and biological factors. These include risk factors of alcohol and tobacco use, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity. Depression is when a person experiences depressed mood (feeling sad, irritable, empty) or a loss of pleasure or interest in activities for more than two weeks. Depression can severely impact a person's ability to function and interact with people and society. It is estimated that around 264 million people are affected by depression, or around 5% of adults. Women are more affected by depression than men. Worldwide about 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience a mental disorder, primarily depression. In developing countries, this is even higher 15.6% during pregnancy and 19.8% after. In this way, this paper discusses some of the reasons, problems associated with depression. The author has also discussed about importance of yoga for treat depression.*

**Key Words:** Depression, depressive, psychotherapy, irritable, environmental, psychological, unhealthy diet.

If you shift from unwillingness to Willingness, from inertia to Effervescence, your life will be Joyful and Effortless. And one day, when you look back, you will see you have lived a Spectacular Life.

-Sadguru

Mental health is a state of wellbeing where people and societies function at their best. That is, where people can cope with the stresses of everyday life, work productively, and contribute to their communities. Mental health conditions and neurological disorders are conditions that affect thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and relationships. These include disorders that cause a high burden of disease such as depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, dementia, substance use disorders, among many others. These conditions can be experienced in isolation; however, they often occur alongside other noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancers.

Depression makes you pessimistic and is deeply self-damaging. Depressed people only hurt themselves more. Killing need not necessarily mean physical killing. A depressed person is always trying to cause more damage to himself. The mind and the inner nature cannot get hurt. It is only the ego that gets hurt. So, if you are saying, "I want to grow," growth means going beyond this, trampling your ego and going ahead.

One can make any emotion into a creative force in their life. If your sadness reminds you that you are incomplete, it is good; make use of your sadness to grow. But, when you get sad, if you are going to get irritable and angry, and that whole world is wrong, you are a fool. Do you want to make this sadness into anger or into love and compassion? It is very easy when you are sad, to become compassionate. It is already a dissolving kind of energy; you can use it for further dissolution which leads you to your ultimate well-being. In yoga, depression is handled at the level of the body, mind and the energies. If the necessary balance and vibrancy is brought about in the physical, mental and energy bodies, to be blissful being is very natural. In a blissful being, depression can never exist. Depression is



among the most common mental health disorders experienced in the US. In fact, over 40 million adults in the US have an anxiety disorder, and 17.3 million struggle with major depressive disorder (MDD). Anxiety and depression can impact physical health and have long-lasting effects on the individual and their loved ones.

**What is Brain Fog-** Brain fog can occur as a result of these mental health conditions or stress. Brain fog from time to time is a normal experience. However, brain fog can become a recurrent problem that interferes with daily functioning when it is caused by depression or anxiety. Brain fog is not a medical condition but is instead a group of symptoms that are involved with cognitive decline. Brain fog is characterized by the inability to concentrate, difficulty with memory, and difficulty completing tasks. Depending on the severity of this group of symptoms, cognitive decline can begin to interfere with work, school, or daily functioning.

Brain fog is believed to be caused by high levels of inflammation and changes to hormones that determine mood, energy, and focus. The imbalance of hormone levels can negatively impact not only the brain but the whole body. Brain fog can lead to other conditions like obesity, abnormal menstruation, and diabetes.

**Depression & Brain Fog-** Brain fog can occur during depressive episodes because of what happens to the brain. The physical makeup of the brain can be altered during long periods of depression. Stress and depression can lead to impacts on the hippocampus and amygdala brain regions.

The hippocampus can shrink causing difficulties with executive functioning skills, concentration, and making decisions. The thalamus changes with prolonged depression can impact sleeping patterns and the processing of sensory information. The amygdala may be overactive with depression and cause a heightened level of fear and anxiety leading to brain fog symptoms. Brain fog can be caused by anxiety, depression, and other medical conditions. Prolonged cognitive decline can create difficulties with daily functioning, working, and schooling. Hormonal changes and brain inflammation can increase brain fog symptoms.

**Clinical depression-** It can occur for a variety of reasons and it has many different triggers. For some people, an upsetting or stressful life event, such as divorce, illness, joblessness and job or money worries, can be the cause. Different causes can often combine to trigger depression. For example, you may feel low after being ill and then experience a traumatic event, such as a bereavement, which brings on depression. People often talk about a "downward spiral" of events that leads to depression. For example, if your relationship with your partner breaks down, you're likely to feel low, you may stop seeing friends and family and you may start drinking more. All of this can make you feel worse and trigger depression. Some studies have also suggested that you're more likely to get depression as you get older, and that it's more common in people who live in difficult social and economic circumstances. Some reasons are-

**Stressful events-** Most people take time to come to terms with stressful events, such as bereavement or a relationship breakdown. When these stressful events occur, your risk of becoming depressed is increased if you stop seeing your friends and family and try to deal with your problems on your own.

**Personality-** You may be more vulnerable to depression if you have certain personality traits, such as low self-esteem or being overly self-critical. This may be because of the genes you've inherited from your parents, your early life experiences, or both.

**Family history-** If someone in your family has had depression in the past, such as a parent or sister or brother, it's more likely that you'll also develop it.

**Giving birth-** Some women are particularly vulnerable to depression after pregnancy. The hormonal and physical changes, as well as the added responsibility of a new life, can lead to postnatal depression.

**Loneliness-** Feelings of loneliness, caused by things such as becoming cut off from your family and friends can increase your risk of depression.

**Alcohol and drugs-** When life is getting them down, some people try to cope by drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs. This can result in a spiral of depression. Cannabis can help you relax, but there's evidence that it can



also bring on depression, particularly in teenagers. "Drowning your sorrows" with a drink is also not recommended. Alcohol affects the chemistry of the brain, which increases the risk of depression.

**Teaching Yoga for Depression-** Depression is one of the fastest-growing medical concerns worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recorded an estimate of 264 million people of all ages suffering from depression globally. Women are more prone to be affected by it than men. At its worst, it can lead to suicide. It is the second major cause of death among 15 to 29-year-olds. There are different treatments available to suppress the conditions of depression. Therapy and counselling help a patient in resolving some underlying issues. The dosage of medicines results in controlling the neuro-hormones of the brain to some extent. The need for an alternative treatment has directed the attention of medical practitioners towards yoga.

Many studies and clinical trials found yoga to be an effective practice for curing depression. The balance of body and mind can be achieved through the regular practice of yoga. The combination of yoga and meditation along with psychological counselling develops strength in the body and neutralizes the chemicals of the brain.

The effects of depression on the body are visible because of changes in food habits. When the mind feels overwhelmed by negative thoughts then there is either loss of appetite or overeating. The result is devastating to the body. The daily practice of yoga maintains healthy metabolism. Some yoga styles induce sweat that increases appetite. Healthy food works as a fuel for the body. The body starts receiving the necessary nutrients and oxygen. The lost energy due to depression is restored. Staying hydrated becomes a natural habit due to physical movement. Water and healthy drinks like coconut water rejuvenate the skin cells.

While increasing flexibility, yoga also aids in balancing the metabolism. Yoga practitioners find it easier to develop mindful eating habits, as they become more sensitive to hunger cues. There is more feeling of fullness and satisfaction. The practice of yoga balances the energy centres of the body. Yoga exercises that focus on the core or abdomen stimulate digestion. The combination of healthy foods and yoga creates discipline to maintain proper health. When the physical strength revives, it becomes easy to manage emotions. The symptoms of depression are replaced by acknowledging gratitude towards the present life.

**Conclusion-** Life is unpredictable. The challenges may sometimes defeat our positive spirit causing depression. The complex neurons of the brain are difficult to manage but not impossible. Yoga and various breathing techniques are very effective methods to support the treatment of depression. Yoga supports the efforts of medicines and therapy during the treatment of depression, as it calms the agitated mind and regulates the nervous system.

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