

## Anti-depressants and You

Media coverage regarding anti-depressants, particularly through advertising, is flourishing. On the one hand, this is good news because it helps to ‘normalize’ depression, one of the most common psychological issues that people face. However, viewers are often left with the impression that just popping a pill will cure all ills.

The fact is that depression is a highly treatable condition. Data consistently demonstrates that there are three critical components to recovery from severe depression: medication; talk therapy and physical exercise. Too often, advertising focuses only on medication as the solution and encourages people to “just ask your doctor” even though that doctor may not specialize in psychological problems. As a result, many people on medication are only receiving one third of the recommended treatment for depression.

It is important to know that not everyone who is depressed needs medication. Supportive therapy and life style changes can work very well in curing many forms depression.

Signs of depression include:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Persistent sad or blue mood
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Isolation or withdrawal
- Anger, hostility
- Changes in relationships
- Loss of interest in activities
- Loss of energy

If you think you might be depressed, make an appointment with a psychologist or a psychiatrist. Talk with that person about your symptoms. Make sure that all three aspects of treatment are discussed and that you participate in and follow the recommended treatment plan. While it may take some hard work on your part, you can feel happier and more in control by appropriately addressing your symptoms.

**Danger:** Mixing any kind of anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medication with alcohol or street drugs is potentially lethal. Not taking your meds on the day you intend to get drunk does not work. The medication has built up in your system and stopping it for a day or two does not alleviate the hazards of combining drugs and alcohol. In addition, the medication only works if you take it consistently.

On campus, both **University Health Center (562-1348)** and the **Counseling Center (562-1220)** work with students who suffer from depression or anxiety. If you think that you, or a friend, might be depressed, please call either office to speak with a staff member. Depression and anxiety are both very treatable.

**IF YOU OR A FRIEND IS HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE, DO NOT WAIT TO GET ASSISTANCE. CALL NOW!**

**Counseling Center – 660-562-1220**  
**University Health Center – 660-562-1348**  
**Campus Safety – 660-562-1254**  
**St. Francis Mental Health Crisis Line – 660-562-2227 or 1-800-841-3866**