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Depression: Family Fact Sheet #2

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DEPRESSION FAMILY FACT SHEET #2

Could the sadness, loneliness or anger that some of us feel today be a sign of depression? It is not unusual for caregivers of relatives and friends to develop mild or moderate depression as a result of the constant demands they face in providing care.

Caregiving does not cause depression nor will every caregiver experience negative feelings that go with depression. However, caregivers often sacrifice their own physical and emotional needs and when this happens providing care can strain even the most capable person.

Early attention to symptoms of depression through exercise, a healthy diet, the positive support of family and friends, or consultation with a trained mental health professional may prevent the development of a more serious depression over time.

What are the symptoms of depression?

- A change in eating habits – eating more or eating less
- A change in sleep patterns – too much sleep or not enough
- Feeling tired, exhausted or overwhelmed all the time
- A loss of interest in things that once brought you pleasure
- Feeling nothing you do is good enough
- Irritability, easily agitated or easily angered
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Any of these symptoms lasting more than two weeks

Lack of sleep is a major cause of depression in caregivers. Try to maintain a regular sleep schedule.

“Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” and “getting a grip” will not alleviate depression.

Depression deserves to be treated with the same attention and consideration afforded any other illness. The important thing is to seek help.

For your health and the health of those around you, take some time to care for yourself.

Depression is a highly curable illness with appropriate medical care. Again, please do not hesitate to seek help from your physician or a qualified mental health provider.

**For more information, talk to your primary care physician
or contact your Area Agency on Aging: 1-877-353-3771**

A Joint Project of the Eastern Agency on Aging and the University of Maine Center on Aging in partnership with Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, Senior Spectrum, Rosscare, Norumbega Medical, Horizons Health Services, Indian Township Tribal Health Center, and Bucksport Regional Health Center