

# Medication & Depression

## Are Medications Always Necessary?

Medications for depression are not always the treatment of choice, and are rarely the only treatment recommended for depression. Research has shown that certain types of psychotherapy (cognitive-behavioral therapy, for example) in conjunction with exercise and healthy lifestyle changes can often help people manage the symptoms of depression without medication. However, in cases where depression is severe, medications may be a useful tool along with other treatments to help control the symptoms.

## What Medications Are Available?

If it is felt that medications may be useful, a consultation with your primary care physician or a psychiatrist is necessary. The most common types of medications prescribed for depression are the SSRI's (Serotonin Specific Reuptake Inhibitors).

Examples of SSRI medications include:

- Prozac
- Zoloft
- Paxil
- Celexa
- Lexapro

Other medication options include the "atypical" antidepressants:

- Wellbutrin
- Effexor
- Cymbalta
- Remeron
- Desyrel
- Serzone

All of these medications can have side effects, and should be used only under the direct care and supervision of a physician.

## How Long Will I Have To Take Medications?

This is a personal choice that should be carefully and intelligently made along with your physician. However, in many cases, patients can gradually reduce and eliminate their antidepressant medications after 6-9 months, if they are also engaged in psychotherapy or making beneficial lifestyle changes. In cases of severe or chronic depression, however, medication may be necessary for much longer periods of time.

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