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DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT A SPECIFIC TOPIC?
SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS TO:

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OR CALL
203-387-9332

HELPFUL TIPS TO EMPOWER
DIALYSIS PATIENTS

Kidney Chronicles

May is...

Mental Health Awareness Month!

Depression is the most common psychological problem in the chronic dialysis population. Depression can affect physical, mental and social well-being.

What is depression?

We all go through ups and downs in our mood. Sadness is a normal reaction to life's struggles, setbacks, and disappointments. Many people use the word "depression" to explain these kinds of feelings, but depression is much more than just sadness. Whatever the symptoms, depression is different from normal sadness in that it affects your day-to-day life. Depression can interfere with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and have fun. When people are depressed they may experience feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness.

Are you depressed?

If you identify with several of the following signs and symptoms, and they just won't go away, you may be suffering from depression.

- ◆ You can't sleep or you sleep too much
- ◆ You can't concentrate or find that previously easy tasks are now difficult
- ◆ You feel hopeless and helpless
- ◆ You can't control your negative thoughts, no matter how much you try
- ◆ You have lost your appetite or you can't stop eating
- ◆ You are much more irritable and short-tempered than usual
- ◆ You have thoughts that life is not worth living (*seek help **immediately** if this is the case*).

It is always important to tell your doctor if you feel any of these



things so your doctor can make sure there aren't any medical reasons that may make you feel depressed.

Lifestyle changes may sometimes help if you feel depressed. Self-help strategies that can be very effective include:

- ◆ Cultivating supportive relationships
- ◆ Getting regular exercise and sleep
- ◆ Eating a healthy, mood-boosting diet
- ◆ Managing stress
- ◆ Practicing relaxation techniques
- ◆ Challenging negative thought patterns
- ◆ Talking to a counselor, therapist, or your social worker

Dealing with depression: Self-help and coping tips

For help getting started and following through with positive lifestyle changes, go to http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_tips.htm



If You Are Feeling Hopeless

When you're feeling extremely depressed or suicidal, problems don't seem temporary—they seem overwhelming and permanent. But with time, you will feel better, especially if you reach out for help. If you are feeling suicidal, know that there are many people who want to support you during this difficult time, so please reach out for help! Call 911 immediately or tell a friend family member or loved one how you feel.