



Fall/Winter 2016

Depression Coping with changes and challenges

When you're living with depression, how do you cope when a stressful change or challenge comes your way? It might be a serious illness or injury, or even the loss of a loved one.

These steps can help you manage:

Seek out caring people. More than ever, it's time to surround yourself with positive, caring friends and family.

Stay informed. If you're facing a health problem, learn as much as you can about it. Ask your doctor what steps you can take to protect your health and manage your condition.

Try positive self-talk. Tell yourself, "Many people cope with this, and I can too." Or, "Most of my fears won't come to pass."

Reach out. If your depression gets worse—or you feel overwhelmed—tell your doctor.

Of course, taking care of your body can help you feel better too. You can do this by eating healthy foods and getting enough exercise and sleep.

Sources: American Heart Association (www.heart.org); American Psychological Association (www.apa.org); Mental Health America (www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs. If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please contact the Care Management Department.

Contact us

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Member Services: **1-800-279-1878**
(TTY **7-1-1** or **1-800-828-1120**)

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

www.aetnabetterhealth.com/virginia

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Connect with others: It's good for your health

When we're not feeling so good, it's easy to isolate ourselves. We don't talk to others as much. Our excuse might be that we're just too busy. We put our heads down and push through chores and deadlines.

However, making time to connect with others is important. Social networks can help lift our mood and improve our health too. Strong ties with family, friends and co-workers can help:

- Ease stress
- Reduce loneliness
- Lower blood pressure
- Boost the immune system
- Provide a sense of purpose and meaning
- Provide support if you're dealing with a chronic condition

Making bonds stronger

It's true that humans are wired to connect. Sometimes the wiring just needs a new place to plug in.

Today, take some time to think about your interests. Then ask yourself these questions:

- What do I enjoy?
- What would I like to learn?
- What would I like to do?

Then think of ways you can enjoy those interests with others.

Building social connections takes time and effort. But you'll be glad you did. It's something that will benefit you all of your life.

Sources: *Mental Health America* (www.mentalhealthamerica.net); *Office on Women's Health* (www.womenshealth.gov)



Need help? Your care manager can tell you more about depression and help you connect with your provider. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Do the holidays stress you out?

Winter can be a difficult time of year. The weather changes and the holidays are upon us. Having a chronic condition can add to these challenges. Sometimes that causes depression and anxiety. That, in turn, can make your condition worse. It can also hurt family and friend relationships and other areas of your life.

If you feel down or out-of-sorts for a couple weeks or

more, tell your doctor. A simple, online questionnaire can help start that discussion. Go to www.adaa.org and click on "Live and Thrive." On the "Ask and Learn" page, you'll find a link to a depression screening tool. After you answer the questions, print the results and share them with your doctor.

Source: *Anxiety and Depression Association of America* (www.adaa.org)

Flu season is here: Have you gotten your shot?

Your best bet for avoiding the flu? Get a shot every year.

That's true for just about everyone. And if you have a chronic condition, it's even more important. Try to get the shot as soon as you can in the fall.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (www.cdc.gov)