Sad. Hopeless. Empty. That’s how many people with depression feel.

If you’ve been diagnosed with this serious disorder, there are things you can do to feel better. Treatment can help you enjoy life again.

If your treatment plan includes medicines for depression, here are a few things to know:

**They don’t all work the same way.**
Different types of antidepressants work in different ways to change brain chemicals that regulate moods.

**They need time to work.**
Antidepressants don’t work right away. You may need to take them for up to six weeks to feel the full effect.

**You may need to try more than one medicine.**
Some people are not helped by their first antidepressant. You may need to try several types — or a combination — to find what works best for you.

**Don’t stop taking your medicine.**
You may want to stop taking your medicine as you start to feel better, but don’t. If you stop too soon, your depression may come back.

**Talk therapy may help your medicine work better.**
Antidepressants often work best when combined with talk therapy. Seeing your therapist regularly can help you stay on track with your treatment goals and learn helpful coping techniques.

Sources: National Institute of Mental Health (www.nimh.nih.gov); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov)
Know the warning signs of suicide

Being able to spot the warning signs of suicide could save a life. Reach out for help if you or someone you know:

- Talks about wanting to kill themselves
- Talks about wanting to die or not having a reason to live
- Researches or plans ways to kill themselves
- Talks about not wanting to be a burden to others
- Seems to think about death and dying all the time
- Says goodbye to friends and family
- Takes risks with their life
- Says they feel guilty, ashamed or trapped
- Acts anxious or restless
- Acts angry or talks about revenge
- Seems to be in a lot of pain
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Has drastic mood swings or changes in behavior
- Withdraws from people
- Loses interest in school, work or hobbies
- Makes a will or puts their affairs in order
- Gives away things that mean a lot to them
- Has had big recent losses
- Loses interest in how they look
- Uses alcohol or drugs more than usual

Get help right away
If you or someone else is thinking of suicide, reach out for help. Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255). Help is here.

Sources: American Psychological Association (www.apa.org); National Institute of Mental Health (www.nimh.nih.gov)

Three questions to ask your doctor about opioids

Opioids can be dangerous when overused or abused. Before you take an opioid, ask your doctor:

1. Why do I need it?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there safer options?

Ask about Narcan too. It’s a medicine that could save your life if you overdose.

Need help getting clean? To find treatment near you, call 1-800-662-4357.

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (www.samhsa.gov); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov)

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to www.MercyCareAZ.org or call Member Services at 1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711) and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

Caregivers: Seek the help you deserve

If you are a caregiver, ask your loved one’s care manager about their needed services as well as services you might need as a caregiver. For example, you may feel overwhelmed, sad or burned out. The care manager can provide information and referrals for support.

It’s not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. The vaccine is safe and won’t cause the flu. If you haven’t had the flu shot yet, it’s not too late to get it. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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