

## Major Depressive Disorder

*It has been 6 months since Sally's mother died from breast cancer. Sally has not returned to work and spends most of her days lying in bed, staring into space, or crying. Her husband complains that she never wants to talk to or spend time with him anymore.*

Someone with **major depressive disorder** may have an experience like the one above.

The National Institute of Mental Health characterizes major depressive disorder by “a combination of symptoms that interfere with a person's ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy once-pleasurable activities.”<sup>1</sup> “Major depressive disorder is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. Each year about 6.7% of U.S adults experience major depressive disorder.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, **signs and symptoms** of major depressive disorder can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.<sup>1</sup>

## Bibliography

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<sup>1</sup> The National Institute of Mental Health, "Depression." Accessed July 25, 2013.  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>.