

Subject 2: Risk factors for depression

There are many [risk factors](#) that increase the chances of developing depression including:

- life events (e.g. living in an abusive relationship),
- long term unemployment),
- family history,
- pessimistic personality or low self-esteem,
- serious medical illness,
- drug and alcohol use, and
- changes in the brain (chemical imbalances).

The brain chemistry imbalance in particular is what antidepressant medication seeks to rectify. The neurotransmitters serotonin, norepinephrine (or noradrenaline), and dopamine are particularly relevant to your body's ability to control sleep, mood and experience a sense of pleasure. It is widely believed that lower levels of serotonin trigger a drop in norepinephrine levels leading to depression. Dopamine controls your ability to experience positive emotions.

There is also some evidence that depression might be linked to diet and an [imbalance of good and bad bacteria](#) in your digestive system.

If you are concerned about depression

Effective treatments for depression are available to help. Speak to your doctor or company provided counselling service for advice on the best option for you.

Do you want to find out more?

The Generali Employee Benefits Network has partnered with FlourishDx to provide video and other resources on mental health and sleep health. Access these resources [here](#).