What you should know

- Depression is an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks.
- In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
- Much can be done to prevent and treat depression.

What you can do if you are feeling down, or think you may be depressed

- Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Seek professional help. Your local health-care worker or doctor is a good place to start.
- Stay connected. Keep in contact with family and friends.
- Exercise regularly, even if it's just a short walk.
- Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits.
- Avoid or restrict alcohol intake and refrain from using illicit drugs; they can worsen depression.
- Continue doing things you have always enjoyed, even when you don't feel like it.
- Be aware of persistent negative thoughts and self-criticism and try to replace them with positive thoughts. Congratulate yourself on your achievements.

REMEmber:

There is a lot that you can do to keep mentally strong. If you feel that you may be heading for depression, talk to someone you trust or seek professional help.