A chronic disease is one that you have for a long time. Some chronic diseases can be controlled, but they usually cannot be cured. Depression is common in people with chronic diseases, but it often goes unnoticed.

The link between depression and chronic disease is not well understood. But it can be a dangerous one.

Knowing more about depression and chronic disease can help you get the treatment you need. Treatment can help you feel better and have better overall health.

Why does it happen?
Having a chronic disease can be very stressful. You may feel sad because you are facing an illness that could shorten your life. Your disease may cause pain, or it may keep you from working or living on your own, which can lead to depression. In some cases, medicines used to treat chronic diseases can cause depression or make it worse.

Which diseases can lead to depression?
Any chronic disease can increase your chance of having depression. But some common ones include:

• Heart disease.
• Heart attack.
• Multiple sclerosis.
• Stroke.
• Cancer.
• Diabetes.

What are the symptoms?
If you are depressed:

• You may feel sad, worried, or "empty."
• You may feel guilty or worthless.
• You may not enjoy the things you used to enjoy.
• You may feel hopeless, as though life is not worth living.
• You may have trouble thinking or remembering.
• You may have low energy, and you may not eat or sleep well.
• You may pull away from others.
• You may think often about death or killing yourself.

The symptoms of depression are often subtle at first. You may think they are caused by your disease rather than depression. Or you may think it is normal to be depressed when you have a chronic disease.
Talk to your doctor if you have any changes in mood during treatment for your disease. If you think you are depressed, it is important to get help.

**What can you do?**

Ask your doctor for help. Counseling, antidepressant medicine, or a combination of the two help most people with depression. Often a combination works best. Counseling can also help you cope with having a chronic disease.

By treating your depression, you can feel more hopeful and have more energy. If you feel better, you may take better care of yourself, so your health may improve.