

# Teen depressive symptoms can persist into young adulthood

August 20 2024, by Lori Solomon

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Increases in depressive symptoms in adolescence can persist into young adulthood for people born from 1997 to 2001, with higher rates of depressive symptoms than previous birth cohorts, according to a study

[published](#) online Aug. 14 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Katherine M. Keyes, Ph.D., from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University in New York City, and colleagues assessed the extent to which increases in adolescent [depressive symptoms](#) in recent birth cohorts persist among [young adults](#). The analysis included data from 36,552 participants in the Monitoring the Future longitudinal survey from 1990 to 2019 for birth cohorts from 1972 to 2001.

The researchers found that among females, 19.1% of the 1997 to 2001 birth cohort had high depressive symptoms at the age of 18 years, higher than any previous birth cohort. Depressive symptom prevalence declined by age 21 to 22 years, but still remained higher than prevalence among previous cohorts at that age.

Among males, 13.4% of the 1997 to 2001 birth [cohort](#) had high depressive symptoms at the age of 18 years, with the prevalence increasing through young adulthood. For [males](#) with high baseline depressive symptoms, the odds of symptoms at age 19 to 20 years were 10-fold higher and sixfold higher for symptoms at age 21 to 22 years. Similar findings were seen for [females](#), with ninefold higher odds of symptoms at age 19 to 20 years and sevenfold higher odds of symptoms at age 21 to 22 years.

"Findings of this study suggest the need for primary prevention and mental health resources during the adolescent years," the authors write.

**More information:** Katherine M. Keyes et al, Depressive Symptoms in Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.27748](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.27748)

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Citation: Teen depressive symptoms can persist into young adulthood (2024, August 20)  
retrieved 1 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-teen-depressive-symptoms-persist-young.html>

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