



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

You have been seen by a doctor because you've had thoughts about killing yourself. Maybe you have tried to do it. This is much different from having fleeting thoughts of death, which many people have from time to time. Your doctor and support team will work hard to help keep you safe. Your team may include a case manager, a social worker, and a counselor.

Most people who think about suicide don't want to die. They think suicide will end their problems and pain. People who consider suicide often feel hopeless, helpless, and worthless. These thoughts can make a person feel that there is no other choice.

But you do have a choice. Help is always available. The doctor and staff members are taking you and your pain very seriously. It is important to remember that there are people who are willing and able to talk with you about your suicidal thoughts. Treatment and close follow-up care can help you feel better about life.

Thoughts of hopelessness and suicide may come from being depressed. Depression is a medical condition. When you have depression, there may be problems with activity levels in certain parts of your brain. Chemicals in your brain called neurotransmitters may be out of balance. But depression can be treated. Treatment for depression includes counseling, medicines, and lifestyle changes. With treatment, you can feel better.

Your doctor doesn't want you to hurt yourself. He or she may ask you to sign a "no harm" agreement or contract. This contract is your promise that you will not hurt yourself between now and your next visit. Be completely honest with your doctor if you feel that you can't sign it. You will get help.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Talk to someone. Reach out to family members, friends, your doctor, or a counselor. Be open and honest with them about your thoughts and feelings.
- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Avoid illegal drugs and alcohol.
- Attend all counseling sessions recommended by your doctor.
- Have someone take away sharp or dangerous objects, guns, and drugs from your home.
- Keep the numbers for these national suicide hotlines: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) and 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433).

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have one or more warning signs of suicide. For example, call if:
 - You feel like giving away your possessions.
 - You use illegal drugs or drink alcohol heavily.
 - You talk or write about death. This may include writing suicide notes and talking about guns, knives, or pills.
 - You start to spend a lot of time alone or spend more time alone than usual.
- You hear voices.
- You start acting in an aggressive way that's not normal for you.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>.

Enter **G672** in the search box to learn more about "**Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior: Care Instructions.**"

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