

Teen Depression: FDA-Approved Alternative to Antidepressants Now Available

Leading Scottsdale clinic provides breakthrough non-invasive treatment as teen mental health crisis reaches alarming levels

SCOTTSDALE, AZ, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Adolescents

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Dr. Ruchir P. Patel

struggling with depression in Arizona now have access to an FDA-cleared brain stimulation therapy that doesn't rely on daily medication. [The TMS Institute of Arizona](#) has begun offering Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) therapy for patients aged 15 to 21 who cannot tolerate antidepressants.

The timing couldn't be more critical as teen mental health issues have reached crisis levels. According to a CDC October 2024 nationwide report surveying over 20,000 high school students, 39.7% experienced persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, 20.4% seriously

considered attempting suicide, and approximately 10% had attempted suicide. Rates are nearly twice as high among girls and LGBTQ+ youth.

"These numbers are alarming. What's heartbreaking is seeing young people who believe they don't have options," said Dr. Ruchir P. Patel, Medical Director and founder of The TMS Institute of Arizona. "Traditional antidepressant medications fail too many of our teens with nearly two-thirds of patients unable to take them consistently due to side effects or lack of effectiveness. TMS therapy offers these teens and their families real hope for recovery."

A LIFE-SAVING ALTERNATIVE FOR TREATMENT-RESISTANT TEEN DEPRESSION

The urgency of alternative treatments is highlighted by concerning statistics: approximately 20% of teenagers will experience a depressive episode by age 17, with 15.1% experiencing a major depressive episode. Among those with depression, 87.9% report difficulty with school, work, home, or social activities, and 31.2% have extreme difficulty in these activities, which are normal to a teen's everyday life.

Dr. Patel recently treated a 20-year-old patient whose story shows what's possible with TMS

therapy. "She had severe depression since before age 10, had tried and failed more than six antidepressants, and had attempted suicide just three days before I met her," Dr. Patel said. "After a few weeks of TMS treatment, her suicidal thoughts began decreasing. By week 4, they had completely resolved. By weeks 6 and 7, she had near-complete remission. Her mother said she hadn't seen her daughter that happy in years."

For teens who find medication side effects to be unpleasant (or who forget to take their prescriptions), this is an option worth considering.

HOW TMS WORKS

Non-invasive TMS therapy uses targeted magnetic pulses like those in an MRI machine to stimulate neurons in the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), a brain region that controls mood regulation. The treatment involves placing a figure-eight coil with two six-inch magnets on the patient's head, generating a small magnetic field that speeds up neurons in areas of the brain that aren't functioning optimally for mood control.

Unlike medications and other treatments, TMS:

- Is non-invasive, painless, and requires no anesthesia
- Has no systemic side effects
- Involves short 3-minute treatment sessions over a 7-week course (36 sessions total)
- Requires no recovery time, allowing teens to return immediately to school and activities
- Creates lasting change through neuroplasticity, helping the brain establish healthier patterns
- Benefit duration varies by patient; typical improvement lasts for months or years.

"I've tried TMS myself to understand what patients experience," shared Dr. Patel. "It feels like a gentle tapping sensation on your forehead, which is completely tolerable and nothing like the invasive procedures people might imagine."

The most reported side effect of TMS therapy is temporary discomfort at or near the treatment site, typically occurring early in treatment. The non-invasive nature of the treatment makes it especially suitable for young patients who might not tolerate or benefit from pharmacologic therapies.



Ruchir P. Patel, MD, FACP

INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY

TMS therapy for adolescent depression is covered by most major insurers including Humana, Aetna, Cigna, United Health Care/Optum, and many BlueCross BlueShield plans, with self-pay options available for families who prefer to begin treatment without trying medication first.

ABOUT THE TMS INSTITUTE OF ARIZONA

TMS Institute of Arizona specializes in treating certain mental health conditions, such as depression, OCD, and anxiety, and other indications such as insomnia, addiction, chronic fatigue, PTSD, post-stroke recovery, chronic pain, and smoking cessation, etc. with the most advanced form of treatment, transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). Our treatment center is dedicated to helping patients suffering from debilitating symptoms by providing transformative, life-giving treatment for depressive illnesses and related mood disorders.

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