



HOW TO TELL IF YOUR CHILD SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Loss of energy and withdrawal may signal a problem



Symptoms to look out for

Depression symptoms in children differ slightly from those in adults. Whereas in adults, low mood and loss of pleasure are frequently the two predominant symptoms, children are more prone to experience primary symptoms such as impatience and physical complaints.

Other indications of childhood depression include difficulties concentrating and making decisions, severe shyness, clinging to a parent, hopelessness, unexplained bodily complaints, sleeping issues, appetite changes, and suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

Sadness



Many things can make children unhappy, including lost connections, schoolwork, failures, losing out on something, relocation, or the loss of a friend, pet, or loved one.

Determine the source of your child's sadness and offer help. If feelings of sadness improve or fade in a matter of days, they are most likely unrelated to depression.

Depressed children may have a general sense of grief about their lives and futures, or they may be unable to identify the source of their sadness. They may cry a lot or cry regularly for no apparent reason.

Feelings of grief that continue more than two weeks should be discussed with your child's paediatrician.

Withdrawal from Friends and Family

Most children's friends will change at some point, and they will spend varied amounts of time with their parents.

As youngsters grow older, they naturally distance themselves from their family and begin to identify more with their classmates.

This is a crucial developmental stage to distinguish from social disengagement.

When social disengagement is accompanied with depression, it can add to a child's bad social experiences, which can promote depressed symptoms (such as feelings of worthlessness or that no one likes or understands them).

Losing Interest in Activities

Your child may gradually lose interest in items they formerly enjoyed, such as a favourite toy or TV show, or they may abruptly proclaim that they no longer wish to participate in a favourite activity. This is not the case with a depressed child.

A depressed child finds it difficult to find joy or excitement in anything.

Your child can be uninterested in practically everything. Depressed children frequently appear to be going through the motions, with little joy or pleasure in what they are doing.



Feeling Misunderstood

Every youngster will experience miscommunication at some point in their lives.

A depressed child may believe that no one understands their feelings and that talking about them is futile.

Fear of rejection, misinterpretation, or mockery may cause your child to avoid trying new things, speaking up, or sharing ideas.



Academic Decline

Over time, children may experience academic highs and lows. Remember that course work may get more difficult with the transition to middle or high school.

A depressed child's grades may suffer significantly.

Missing school, having difficulty paying attention, or simply failing to complete work are all causes of such academic decreases.

This may be more noticeable in a child who has previously excelled academically.

Lack of Energy

Everyone gets tired, especially after a long day, hard work, late nights, sicknesses, and exercise, but an unhappy child may appear to lack energy and motivation all of the time.

Even after an appropriate amount of sleep, a depressed child may complain of being tired, move slowly, or take a disproportionate amount of time to complete a task.

Guilt

Excessive and unremitting guilt is frequent in children with depressive disorders such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder depressed episodes, and dysthymia.

Inappropriate and exaggerated guilt: instrument validity and developmental differences in depression.

A depressed child may blame themselves for anything that goes wrong, even if it is beyond their control.

Worthlessness

Children with depressive disorders may feel worthless on a regular or long-term basis, especially after an upsetting occurrence.

Children who have sentiments of worthlessness may believe they are weak, insufficient, or imperfect.

Children who believe they have no worth may believe they are innately terrible and that everything they do is wrong.

They may not put up any effort in school, participate in unstable relationships, or even attempt to interact with others because they fear their attempts will fail or produce extra issues.

Impulsivity and Aggression

Some sad children and teenagers may become furious at the people or things they believe are the source of their sorrow as a result of their feelings.

This can result in rash and violent behaviour.

Impulsive behaviours are uncontrollable reactions to situations (generally unfavourable ones).

Impulsive behaviours frequently, but not always, result in aggressive behaviour.

Aggressive behaviours can be directed inside, as in self-injury, or outward, as in furious outbursts, harassment, property damage, or violence.

Causes



Childhood depression is a complicated illness with numerous causes.

A variety of variables can contribute to the start of depression in children. Many children suffer from depression.

Some of the risk factors that can contribute to childhood depression include...

- **Brain chemistry:** Imbalances in certain neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine can play a role in causing depression.
- **Environment:** A chaotic or unstable home life can be a risk factor for depression, as can experiencing social isolation or bullying at school.
- **Family history:** Having close family members and relatives with depression increases the risk of experiencing childhood depression. One 30-year study found that those with the highest risk of depression were those with two previous generations of family members with depression.
- **Physical health:** Health conditions, particularly chronic illnesses such as type 1 diabetes, can increase the risk of experiencing childhood depression.
- **Stress:** Life events such as moving and divorce can play a role in causing childhood depression.

How to Help



If you suspect your child is depressed, see your paediatrician, who can assess the symptoms, rule out an underlying medical ailment, and offer the best treatment.

Here are few a few things that you can do to help your child cope with feelings of depression

Monitor Your Child's Moods

Keep an eye out for signs including depression, impatience, loss of enjoyment, change in appetite, change in sleeping habits, weariness, feelings of worthlessness, and thoughts of death.

Consult a doctor if your child exhibits any of these symptoms.

Provide Reassurance

Make it clear to your youngster that depression is not anything to be ashamed of.

Depression, like the flu, is a sickness, and proper treatment can help children recover.

Encourage Your Child to Talk

Allow your child to experience these emotions.

Children might easily develop the belief that it is not acceptable to be depressed and may begin to suppress their feelings rather than dealing with them in a healthy manner.



Teach Your Child to Ask For Help

Children must understand that there will be assistance available when they require it.

Give them a list of individuals to whom they can talk, such as you, a teacher, or a counsellor.



Thank You for Reading



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