



Worried that your child is depressed?

Growing up is full of changes – like starting school, going through puberty, and preparing for exams. For some children, changes like this can cause stress and depression. If you think that your child may be depressed, read on...

What you should know

If you have young children

- It's common for young children to experience emotional problems.
- A headache or stomach ache, persistent crying or difficulty being away from you can be signs of an emotional problem.
- Loss of interest in play, irritability and difficulty concentrating are other signs.
- Depression, however, is rare among young children.

If you have older children or teenagers

- Depression is quite common among older children and teenagers.
- Signs and symptoms include: persistent sadness or irritability; difficulty in carrying out daily activities; loss of interest in activities that they normally enjoy; withdrawal from others; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; fatigue; restlessness; difficulty concentrating; changes in appetite or sleep patterns; taking risks they wouldn't normally take.
- Depression is not a sign of weakness and can be prevented and treated.

What you can do

- Talk to your child about how they're feeling and whether anything's worrying them.
- Pay particular attention to their well-being during life changes such as starting a new school or puberty.
- Encourage your child to get enough sleep, eat regularly, be physically active, and to do things they normally enjoy.
- Spend time with them.
- Speak to people you trust who know your child, to see if they've noticed anything that might be worrying them.
- Ask your health-care provider for advice. Don't delay getting in touch if you're worried.
- Protect your child from situations where they may experience excessive stress, maltreatment or violence.
- If your child has thoughts of self-harm, or has already self-harmed, seek help from the emergency services or a health-care professional. And remove items such as medicines, sharp objects and firearms.

REMEMBER: If you think your child might be depressed, talk to them about how they're feeling. And don't be afraid to seek professional help.

