Depression
Let's talk

Worried that your child is depressed?

Growing up is full of challenge and opportunity — starting and changing school, making new friends, going through puberty and preparing for exams … Some children take change in their stride. For others, adaptation is harder, causing stress and even depression. If you are worried that your child might be depressed, read on.

What you should know

- Depression is an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks.
- Additional signs and symptoms of depression during childhood include withdrawal from others, irritability, excessive crying, difficulty concentrating at school, a change in appetite or sleeping more or less.
- Younger children may lose interest in play. Older children may take risks that they would not normally take.
- Depression is both preventable and treatable.



REMEMBER:

If you think your child might be depressed, talk to him or her about any worries or concerns, and seek professional help if needed.

What you can do if you think your child might be depressed

- Talk to him or her about things happening at home, at school and outside of school. Try to find out whether anything is bothering him or her.
- Talk to people you trust who know your child.
- Seek advice from your health-care provider.
- Protect your child from excessive stress, maltreatment and violence.
- Pay particular attention to your child's wellbeing 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 that he or she enjoys.
- Make time to spend with your child.
- If your child has thoughts of harming him- or herself, or has already done so, seek help from a trained professional immediately.