



Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Depression in Children

What is depression?

Depression is a mood problem. Although depression has to do with feelings, it can also affect the child's thinking, interests, activities and behaviors around other people. Depression is also called depressive illness.



Although depression has to do with feelings, it can also affect the child's thinking, interests, activities and behaviors around other people.

A child may be born with a risk for depression. A child may become depressed in response to certain experiences. Sometimes, it is both.

How do I know if my child has depression?

There are many signs that a child is depressed. A child who has some of these symptoms most of the time may be depressed.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling angry | <input type="checkbox"/> feeling guilty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sad or empty | <input type="checkbox"/> feeling worthless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> little energy | <input type="checkbox"/> low self-esteem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tired | <input type="checkbox"/> mood changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trouble falling asleep | <input type="checkbox"/> temper tantrums |

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> trouble staying asleep | <input type="checkbox"/> trouble having fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trouble concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> trouble making decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trouble paying attention | <input type="checkbox"/> irritable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> violent outbursts | <input type="checkbox"/> aggressive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not interested in doing fun things | <input type="checkbox"/> restless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tearful | <input type="checkbox"/> hurts self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinks about death a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> changes in school grades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wants to be alone more than usual | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loses or gains a lot of weight in a short time | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinks about killing himself or herself (may or may not have a plan) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't feel well most of the time, but is not sick | |

How is it diagnosed?

A doctor or nurse practitioner trained in mental health or a psychologist can tell you if your child has depression. He or she will ask you and your child questions about your child's feelings and behaviors.

What is the treatment?

Depression may be treated by therapy, medicine or both.

How can I help my child?

- If you think your child is depressed, tell your child's doctor.
- Help your child feel safe, especially at home and school.
- When your child tells you how he or she feels, listen. Even if the feelings are sad or angry.
- Help your child use words to express feelings, instead of actions. Practice different situations with your child.
- Help your child express anger safely. Let your child tell you what makes him or

her angry. Help your child write or draw about it, or hit a pillow. Do not let your child hurt himself or others.

- Tell your child you love him or her.
- Tell your child what you like about him or her.
- Help your child exercise, such as running, jumping or playing in sports.
- Help your child do things that are fun. Help your child play.
- Tell your child when you see him or her doing well. Praise your child for it.
- Praise your child for trying.
- Praise your child when he or she finishes a task.
- Tell your child you know how hard some tasks can be.
- Ask your child to do things you know he or she is able to do. Choose things your child can do quickly and well. Success feels good.
- Help your child see the good things in life, rather than the bad.
- Help your child solve problems:
 1. Help your child say what the problem is.
 2. Help your child talk about possible ways to solve the problem.
 3. Help your child decide what to do.
 4. Help your child do it.
 5. Help your child look at how it worked.
- If you think you are depressed, call your doctor. This will help you, and help your child.



When your child tells you how he or she feels, listen. Even if the feelings are sad or angry.

- Other tips:

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse, doctor or therapist how you will help your child.
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-546-1400
888-908-5437
www.phoenixchildrens.com

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Friday, April 6, 2007 • DRAFT in family review
#272 • Written by Ann Guthery, Psy.N.P., RN and Fran London, MS, RN
• Illustrated by Dennis Swain
This handout is also available in Spanish as #594/272s.



**PHOENIX
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL**

The Emily Center

Depression in Children
Diagnosis/Disease/Illness

Name of Health Care Provider: _____ Number: 272
For office use: Date returned: _____ db nb

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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Thank you for helping us!