

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

There are warning signs to look for that indicate abuse may have occurred. However, these signs do NOT prove abuse due to the fact that other circumstances may also cause these same symptoms. If your child or another child you know displays some of these signs, action should be taken to further investigate the cause.

****Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Behavioral Signs:

- withdrawal, chronic depression
- excessive seductiveness
- overly concerned for siblings
- poor self-esteem
- peer problems
- massive weight change
- suicide attempts
- lack of emotional control
- sudden school difficulties
- premature understanding of sex
- threatened by physical contact
- problems going to sleep
- nightmares
- sudden onset of bedwetting
- eating disorders
- fear of leaving parents or the house
- fear around a particular person
- frequent mood changes
- anxiety

Physical Signs:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitals
- Venereal/sexually transmitted diseases
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections

****Signs of Physical Abuse**

Behavioral signs:

- self-destructive
- Withdrawn and aggressive to extremes
- Uncomfortable with physical contact
- Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home
- Chronic runaway
- Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably
- Wears clothing inappropriate to weather conditions to cover body

Physical signs:

- Unexplained bruises (in various stage of healing), welts, human bite marks, bald spots
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions

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