

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. It can even impact how a child's body feels and how quickly he or she fights an illness.

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



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

How is it diagnosed?

A doctor trained in mental health 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.

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"/> using drugs or alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> irritable | <input type="checkbox"/> changes in grades at school |
| <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"/> history of suicide attempt | <input type="checkbox"/> hurts self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinks about death a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> tearful |
| <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"/> makes hopeless or actual threats on social media | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't feel well most of the time, but is not sick | |

What is the treatment?

Depression may be treated by therapy, medicine or both. Both treatments together are usually considered the best way to treat depression.

How can I help my child?

- Tell your child's doctor if you think your child is depressed.
- Tell your child to talk to a responsible adult about his or her feelings.
- Help your child feel safe, especially at home and school. Make sure to deal with bullying if it is happening.
- Listen when your child tells you how he or she feels, 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 herself or others.
- Tell your child you love him or her.
- Tell your child what you like about him or her. Be kind, positive and honest with your child.
- Help your child exercise, such as running, jumping or playing in sports.
- Help your child do things that are fun. Play with your child.
- Tell your child when you see him or her doing well. Praise your child for it.
- Praise your child for trying. Point out specific things about your child's effort that you really like. Praise your child's efforts and use of imagination and creativity. Do not focus only on the finished product.



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

- Praise your child's efforts. Be specific about what you like, such as your child's creativity and use of imagination.
- 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.
- Ask your child to do a task that might be challenging. Be supportive and offer help. Mastering a challenging task can make your child feel successful.
- Help your child see the good things in life, rather than the bad.
- Help your child solve problems:
 - Help your child say what the problem is.
 - Help your child talk about possible ways to solve the problem.
 - Help your child decide what to do.
 - Help your child do it.
 - Help your child look at how it worked.

For example, you can say, "It sounds like things are really hard for you right now. I love you and I am here for you. I would like to help you in any way possible. Is there something we can do together to help this situation be better?"

- If you think you are depressed, call your doctor. This will help you, and help your child.
- **If your child says he or she is suicidal or wants to hurt himself or others, immediately call your child's doctor or go to the emergency room. If you do not feel safe taking your child to the emergency room, call 9-1-1.**
- **When talking to your child about depression and suicide, let your child know it is okay to call 9-1-1 if your child does not feel safe or wants to hurt himself or others.**

Other tips:



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
 602-933-1400
 866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
 Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)
 Twitter: @emilycenter
 Pinterest: [pinterest.com/emilycenter](https://www.pinterest.com/emilycenter)

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.

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 #272 • Written by Ann Guthery, PhD, PMHNP-BC, and Fran London, MS, RN
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Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#272

Depression in Children

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

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.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!