



Depression warning signs: when should I worry?

By Dr Andrew Wicking

More than 20% of people experience depression at some time in their lives. That means that almost every family has someone experiencing depression at some time. Unfortunately, once someone has experienced depression, they are at far greater risk of feeling that way again.

While we can't guarantee that we can protect everyone from depression, there are things that we can do to make it less likely for you and your child.

In the childhood and teenage years depression can be harder to pick because it is obscured by heightened emotions and times of grumpiness. Some signs of depression are:

- loss of interest in usual activities – their get up and go, has got up & gone;
- increased use of drugs and alcohol;
- sleep problems;
- changes in energy levels - either sluggish, agitated or restless;
- changes in eating patterns – either disinterested in food or over-eating;
- speaking about death and hopelessness;

- increased and inexplicable irritability;
- your own gut feelings about your child.

It is worth getting some help if your child or adolescent is appearing to be depressed. One way to do this to say, “I’m worried about you and I want you to come with me to see someone so that I can work out whether I should be worried or not”. Try to find a good local psychologist, psychiatrist or doctor who can relate to young people.

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