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Signs & Symptoms of Depression in Children

Every child with depression may present with a unique set of symptoms. Signs and symptoms of depression in children include:

- Irritability, anger, or being “on edge”
- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness
- Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities as well as from friends and family
- Increased sensitivity to rejection or criticism
- Changes in appetite (either increased or decreased)
- Changes in sleep (sleeplessness or too much sleep)
- Crying or temper tantrums
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing
- Fatigue (tiredness) and low energy
- Physical complaints (such as stomach aches, headaches) that do not respond to treatment
- Reduced ability to function during activities at home or with friends, in school, extracurricular activities, and in other hobbies or interests
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts or talk of death or suicide
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Please Note: Not all children with depression will have all of these symptoms. In fact, most will have different symptoms at different times and in different settings. Although some children may continue to function reasonably well in structured environments, most children with significant depression will suffer a noticeable change in social activities, loss of interest in school and/or poor academic performance, and/or a change in appearance. Experimentation with illegal substances and/or alcohol may also be a sign of an underlying mental health concern.