

POSSIBLE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE



Some possible physical signs of sexual abuse are:

- Complaining of vaginal or anal pain with no known injury or infection.
- The presence of vaginal or anal bleeding with no known injury, infection or menstrual period.
- Discharge or sexually-transmitted infection.
- Unexplained physical marks including bruises or abrasions in genital areas.

If you see any of these signs, bring your child to a medical provider for evaluation as soon as possible. Some of these may be symptoms of another medical issue not related to abuse.

Most children who experience sexual abuse do not display physical signs.

Emotional and behavioral changes are unexplained or unexpected changes, or reactions that seem out of character for your child:

- You notice your child being more anxious, scared, angry or irritable
- They avoid certain people, places or activities or isolate themselves from others.
- They may also react the opposite way and want to spend a lot of time with a particular person.
- Increases in clinginess
- Child doesn't want to sleep alone at night.
- Child uses new terms for their private parts or talk about sexual things beyond their developmental level.
- They engage in non-age appropriate sexual play with themselves, others, or toys.
- There are changes in sleep patterns or sleep disturbances.
- They display regressive behaviors such as loss of bladder or bowel control ("accidents"), thumb sucking, changes in verbal communication.

Remember, none of these behaviors necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused. However, it may signal the need to talk to a medical professional.