

Health and Human Services

Facts for families: A look at depression and youth

Manic-depressive illness in teens

Teenagers with manic-depressive illness have a combination of extremely high (manic) and low (depressed) moods. Highs may alternate with lows, or the person may feel both extremes at close to the same time. Professionals also refer to manic-depressive illness as bipolar mood disorder.

Manic-depressive illness usually starts in adult life, before the age of 35. Although rare in young children, it does occur in teenagers. This illness can affect anyone. However, if one or both parents have manic-depressive illness, the chances are greater that their children will develop the disorder.

Some of the symptoms (see box, right) are similar to those that occur in teenagers with other problems such as drug abuse, delinquency, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or even schizophrenia. The diagnosis can only be made with careful observation over an extended period of time. A thorough evaluation by a child or adolescent psychiatrist can be helpful in identifying problems and beginning treatment.

Teenagers with manic-depressive illness can be effectively treated. Effective treatment for manic-depressive illness usually includes education of the patient and the family about the illness, medication, and psychotherapy. Psychotherapy helps the teenager understand himself or herself, adapt to stresses, rebuild self-esteem, and improve relationships.

The depressed child

Children and teenagers can suffer from depression, which is defined as an illness when it persists.

Significant depression probably exists in about 5% of children and adolescents in the general population. Children under stress, who experience loss, or who have attention, learning or conduct disorders are at higher risk for depression.

The behavior of depressed children and teenagers differs from behavior of depressed adults. Child and adolescent psychiatrists advise parents to be aware of signs of

Many of the following behaviors can alert you if your child is suffering from depression or manic-depressive illness. If you suspect that your child is suffering from either of these disorders, a child and adolescent psychiatrist will be able to make an accurate diagnosis and recommend treatment.

SYMPTOMS OF MANIC-DEPRESSIVE ILLNESS

- Severe changes in mood compared to others of the same age and background—either usually happy and silly or very irritable.
- Unrealistic highs in self-esteem—for example, a teenager who feels specially connected to God.
- Great energy increase; ability to go with little or no sleep for days without feeling tired.
- Increased talking—the adolescent talks too much, fast, changes topics too quickly, and cannot be interrupted.
- Distractibility—the teen's attention moves constantly from one thing to the next.
- High risk-taking behavior such as jumping off of a roof with the belief that this will not cause injury.
- Persistent sadness, frequent crying, depression.
- Loss of enjoyment in favorite activities.
- Frequent complaints of physical illness such as headaches or stomach aches.
- Low energy level, poor concentration, complaints of boredom.
- Major changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

OTHER SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school.
- Irritability.
- Persistent sadness.

depression in their youngsters.

A child who used to play often with friends may now spend most free time alone or without interests. Things that were once fun now bring little joy to the depressed child. Children or adolescents who are depressed may say they want to be dead or may talk about suicide. Depressed adolescents may abuse alcohol or other drugs as a way to feel better.

Children or adolescents who cause trouble at home or in school may actually be depressed but not know it. Because the youngster may not always seem sad, parents and

teachers may not realize that troublesome behavior is a sign of depression. When asked directly, these children can sometimes state they are unhappy or sad.

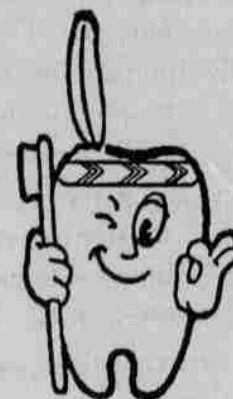
Early diagnosis and medical treatment are essential for depressed children. Help is available. The Tribe's Mental Health component of Health and Human Services may be able to provide you with more information and direction for you and your child.

---Reprinted from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Let's talk teeth...

By Linda Mann, RDH

Are you brushing your teeth correctly? Has anyone ever shown you the proper way to remove all the food particles and plaque from your teeth? Toothbrushing will remove plaque and food particles from the outer, inner, and biting surfaces of your teeth. A number of different toothbrushing methods are acceptable. The following method is one suggested by dental workers.



1. Place your soft-bristled brush head beside your teeth with bristle tips angled against the gum line at 45 degree angle.
2. Move the brush in gentle, tiny circular motions, being careful not to "scrub" the teeth.
3. Brush the outer surfaces of each tooth, upper and lower, keeping the bristles angled against the gum line.
4. Use the same method on all of the inside surfaces of your teeth, upper and lower, still using small circular strokes.
5. Brush the chewing surfaces of the teeth being careful to reach all of the pits and grooves.
6. For the front teeth, brush the inside surfaces of the upper and lower jaws by tilting the brush vertically and making several gentle up and down strokes with the front part of the brush over the teeth and gums.
7. Brush your tongue. This will freshen your breath, and studies have shown that people who brush their tongues get fewer colds.

Other points to remember...

---Brush your gums. This junction where the tooth and gums meet is a critical area to reach. This little area harbors plaque and can lead to gum disease.

---Brush gently! Brushing too aggressively will not only wear out your toothbrush but also cause tooth sensitivity by wearing away tooth enamel and causing gum recession.

---Slow down! The faster you brush your teeth, the more likely you are to miss areas and apply too much pressure.

---Try dry brushing first. Toothpaste is valuable for applying fluoride to teeth and freshening breath, but it also numbs the mouth and reduces your ability to feel if your teeth are really clean.

Brushing your teeth is the most basic yet beneficial act of oral hygiene. Proper brushing and regular check-ups will leave you with a healthy smile.

Dental Clinic update

This month we would like to inform you of changes going on in the dental clinic. Our former dentist, Dr. Scott van Dyken, resigned from the Tribe as of October 31. We wish him the best. Dental hygiene services will continue and be provided by the dental hygienist, Linda Mann. The Human Services Division is currently recruiting to fill the dentist position.

Those patients who are Contract Health Services eligible, we suggest you utilize this service by contacting Barbara or Jackie

if you are in need of emergency care. If you have any questions regarding what to do are where to go for care you may contact the dental clinic at 1-800-775-0095 or 879-2020.

We apologize for any inconveniences during this transition time. We will continue to keep you informed on the status of a new dentist.

We also wish to congratulate Pam and Todd Wilson on the birth of their son, Austin Todd. He was born November 9, and weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces. Pam works for the clinic as a dental assistant.