

Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

Sexually abused children rarely talk about their abuse. Infants and toddlers can't talk, and older children choose to keep silent. Adults can help children by recognizing signs of possible sexual abuse.

These signs **SUGGEST** sexual abuse. Keep in mind that some sexually abused children do not exhibit any signs.

Children up to age 3

- Fear or excessive crying
- Vomiting
- Feeding problems
- Bowel problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Failure to thrive

Children ages 2 to 9

- Fear of particular people, places or activities
- Regression to earlier behaviors such as bed wetting or stranger anxiety
- Victimization of others
- Excessive masturbation
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Fear of abuse recurring
- Eating disturbances

Older children and adolescents

- Depression
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Poor school performance
- Promiscuity
- Substance abuse
- Aggression
- Running away from home
- Fear of recurring abuse
- Eating disturbances
- Suicide or attempts
- Anger

If you notice one or two of these signs and have concerns, call your local law enforcement or Child Protective Services.