How to Recognize Anxiety in Children

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Anxiety Disorders in Children and Teenagers

Although anxiety disorders are more likely to appear in adults, research shows that almost 7% of children and teenagers also suffer from anxiety.

What Causes Anxiety in Children?

There are several common sources of anxiety in children and teenagers.

Children and teens go through many dynamic changes, and sometimes they are not able to cope with them and manage their emotions. Many children develop fears of failure in school, social acceptance, and fear for the family members and for themselves.

One of the most common causes for anxiety in children and teenagers are traumatic events and changes in their lives. This can include divorce, separation from the family, losing a member of the family or illness.

Additionally, a family history of anxiety makes a child more likely to develop an anxiety disorder.

Symptoms of Anxiety in Children

Like all people who suffer from anxiety, children show clear symptoms if they are dealing with an anxiety disorder.

Most of the symptoms are emotional but there are also a number of physical symptoms that you can identify.

- Overthinking or negative thinking. The child worries too much for minor problems or tends to imagine that the worst can happen.
- Signs of anger and aggression or depression
- Problems with concentration and memory
- Fatigue
- Stomachaches
- Dizziness and headaches
- Frequent nightmares or difficulties falling asleep
- Avoidance of certain places, situations or activities

Type of Anxiety Disorder Most Likely in Children and Teens

Social Phobia

Children with social phobia feel excessive fear of social events and activities. This can include going to school, speaking in class or in front of people or meeting new people. In most cases people with social phobia try to avoid

all these social situations and other activities that frighten them.

Panic Disorder

This is one of the most severe anxiety disorders. In most cases it involves experiencing panic attacks. A panic attack is an intense feeling of fear. The person usually feels as though they are trapped and cannot escape.

Along with the fear there are numerous physical symptoms, including heavy breathing, palpitations, dizziness, trembling. Panic attacks can last from a few minutes to half an hour, and often during an attack the person will think they are having a heart attack or they are dying.

Separation Anxiety Disorder

Children who feel excessive fear of leaving their parents likely have separation anxiety disorder. Children with separation disorder worry that something bad will happen to their parents or people they love if they leave them. That is why often these children refuse to leave their parents to attend school and other normal social places and situations for their age.

Along with negative thoughts, these children may also experience physical symptoms like headaches, sleep difficulties and stomachaches.

If you think your child has an anxiety disorder, talk to your family doctor.