

## Teens and Depression

One in 33 kids is depressed. Depression is the second most common childhood mental health problem, according to the World Health Organization. The number of kids diagnosed with depression could double by the year 2020.

### ***5 Signs of Teen Depression, from Dr. Miriam Kaufman, author of "Overcoming Teen Depression"***

1. Lack of attention to personal hygiene
2. A change in social behavior, such as not hanging out with friends as much (if at all)
3. Decreasing grades at school
4. Poor concentration
5. Talking about death or suicide

Less than a quarter of the 12 million kids in the United States who suffer from mental disorders receive treatment, which makes them more prone to lower grades, drug and alcohol abuse, and criminal behavior. Kids with untreated depression are also 12 times more likely to commit suicide.

### ***What Moms Can Do about Teens and Depression***

It may be difficult at first to tell whether a teen is experiencing normal moodiness or is clinically depressed. Dr. Miriam Kaufman, the mother of two teenagers and the author of the book "Overcoming Teen Depression," advises moms to pay close attention to noticeable changes in their teen's behavior.

Dr. Kaufman says the signs of teen depression can be particularly confusing for parents, because depressed teens can display opposite symptoms. For instance, both increased and decreased appetites are signs of depression, as are not sleeping enough and sleeping too much. "Some depressed teens display signs of psychomotor retardation, and appear as if they're moving through molasses, while other kids seem jumpy and agitated," Dr. Kaufman continues. "Some depressed teens cry all the time, while many never cry at all."

"Parents should be on the lookout for a real constellation of these symptoms -- a lot of things going on at once -- that's lasted for a while" (at least a few weeks), Dr. Kaufman advises.

If you notice your teenager slams doors and seems very upset around you, but then hear him laughing and being his usual self with his friends on the phone, he's probably okay,

Dr. Kaufman says. "What you're looking for is overall behavioral changes at home, at school, and with friends, across the board," she adds.

If you suspect your teen is depressed, Dr. Kaufman says it's important to see your child's pediatrician or primary care physician. "A lot of other things could be causing the symptoms -- such as hyperthyroidism and substance abuse -- so you don't want to take him straight to a psychiatrist without looking at the whole picture and ruling those things out first," she concludes.

If your child is suffering from depression, your primary care doctor will likely refer him to a psychologist, family counselor, or psychiatrist to provide him with the help he needs.

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- [Helping Your Teen Cope](#)
- [Depression Is Second Leading Childhood Mental Health Problem](#)

### ***Related Momlogic Stories on Teens and Depression***

1. [Overwhelming Sadness: Teen Depression](#)
2. [When Depression Kills](#)
3. [Teen Sex, Drinking, and Depression](#)

### ***Additional Resources on Teens and Depression***

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)