

Know the signs of child abuse

April 13 2015



All adults must play role in protecting kids from harm, doctor says.

(HealthDay)—A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds in the United States, and more than 1,600 children die each year from abuse or neglect, an expert says.

Child abuse survivors can suffer long-term physical, emotional and [psychological problems](#), said Dr. Mary Jones, a child advocacy physician with the Loyola University Health System in Maywood, Ill.

"The physical wounds heal, but research is showing that the effects on a child's social, emotional and future [physical health](#) is far more damaging than we once thought," Jones said in a Loyola news release.

Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional, and also includes neglect. Most victims experience a combination of these types.

Recognizing the signs of abuse is the first step in helping an abused child.

"One of the major challenges in knowing when a child is suffering maltreatment is that the child rarely discloses to anyone that the abuse is occurring," Jones said.

Warning signs include: sudden changes in a child's behavior or school performance; always being watchful; not receiving help for health problems brought to the parents' attention or lack of adult supervision. Being overly eager to please, overly responsible, or coming to school early and not wanting to go home can also be red flags, Jones said.

You should report suspected abuse or neglect, Jones said. If you believe a child is being abused, contact your local police or the department of [child](#) and family services.

It's also important to take steps to prevent [child abuse](#) by helping families with limited resources or other challenges, she noted.

"Children are our most valuable resources and will shape the future of our community. We all must play a role in ensuring their social and emotional well-being," Jones said.

This means building protective factors in families, she said. With knowledge of [child development](#) and age-appropriate expectations, parental resilience and concrete family supports, "we can reduce or eliminate the risk of maltreatment," she added.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [child abuse](#).

Copyright © 2015 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Know the signs of child abuse (2015, April 13) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-04-child-abuse.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.